

SAVARKAR
AND
HIS TIMES

BY

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TO ALL THOSE

WHO FOUGHT AND FELL IN BHARAT

AND PERISHED IN THE ANDAMANS

AND IN FOREIGN LANDS

FOR INDIAN INDEPENDENCE

PREFACE

Swatantryaveer Savarkar needs no introduction to the Indian public, neither does his biography. Long ago, Mr. Asaf Ali described Savarkar as the spirit of Shivaji and the late Sri Srinivas Sastri said of him that " he was a great and fearless patriot and volumes could be written about his yeoman services in the cause of Indian Freedom." This is, however, too small a volume to describe that spirit and those services adequately.

Savarkar's life has already appeared in almost all Indian languages, and in his twenties it has appeared in almost all European languages. But excepting the great Marathi biography by Sri S. L. Karandikar, who wrote it about seven years ago, no book has dealt exhaustively with the various facets of his life. Hence this is a humble attempt to give in detail the myriad sides of Savarkar's life in its proper historic perspective. This book provides a fuller survey of Savarkar's revolutionary, literary, political and social activities and movements. It also deals with his personal life, and covers his life upto the present moment.

I have made a faithful attempt to present a true and correct picture of the various events and incidents that occurred in the life of Savarkar, and also the trends of thoughts and opinions entertained in those times. Most of them do not necessarily reflect my personal views. But they are narrated to record matters of mere history. To quote Sir Edmund Gosse, I have attempted ' to give a faithful portrait of a soul in its adventures through life '.

Savarkar's life is romantic, epic and volcanic and so it is full of flashes and flames. Bharat has just shed her revolutionary shell, and entered an evolutionary phase. And a revolutionary realist as he is, Savarkar now in Free India naturally insists on the adoption of peaceful, constitutional and democratic means by the people for attaining their

objectives. This was only a logical corollary to Savarkar's ideal as proclaimed in his historic work on '1857'.

My earnest appeal, therefore, to all lovers of Indian Freedom and true democracy is that they should go through this book dispassionately and in a rationalistic manner and know exactly the real Savarkar. And if the book helps them know the real Savarkar, I shall feel glad that the object of writing this book is fulfilled.

My debt of gratitude is gladly acknowledged to all those who read and scrutinised the manuscript and made valuable suggestions, and particularly to those who constantly encouraged me, but whose names I omit for obvious reasons. I also gratefully acknowledge my debt to the various authors, journals and publications from whom I have drawn excerpts. Lastly, my special thanks are due to Messrs. India Printing Works, for their prompt execution and exquisite printing of this work.

D. K.

Bombay, May 10, 1950.

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Childhood and Youth

I

In politically fallen, socially degraded and financially ruined Hindusthan, the eighteen-eighties and nineties witnessed the darkest period in the history of our country. The first peep of the dawn in the form of the reforms of 1909 was still to come. The dawn of 1919 was beyond the horizon. The spiritual planets like Maharshi Ranade, Swami Dayananda Saraswati and Swami Vivekananda were kindling light of social regeneration and spiritual heritage. Dayananda, Dadabhai, Ranade and Vivekananda were rousing the people from their slumber ; Ram Singh Kuka and Wasudeo Balwant had disturbed their thoughts for a good while. Tilak was carrying discontent and unrest from towns to villages and cottages. Babu Anand Mohan Bose and Babu Surendranath Banerjee were infusing a spirit of new life in Bengal. Dreading the resurgent revolts for the overthrow of its power, the British mind was deeply engrossed in finding out a safety valve for the wrath of the Indian revolution. And not long before, the British top-ranking officers and politicians founded the Indian National Congress on December 28, 1885, despite the fears and opposition of Sir Syed Ahmed, who warned the Muslims to keep aloof from the Congress.

Sprung from the neo-ideology of this institution, which was fathered by Englishmen and mothered by the Indian intelligentsia, the Moderates in the following decades placed mild, just and bare demands of the Indians before their god-sent and enlightened rulers and pleaded for them with all the force and prayerfulness of their master-minds. For, strangely enough, they sincerely believed that the victors would of themselves bless the vanquished with the much cherished reforms.

The press was almost muzzled. The Arms Act was introduced, not, as it may be imagined, with a view to

delivering Indians but to degenerating and emasculating them further. Bills and budgets were prepared, printed, published and enforced before they were even known or seen by Indians. The Ilbert Bill also fomented the growing ill-feeling. The First Indian Councils Act of 1861 was slightly widened in 1892. In short, it was a shameful and mournful period. The alternative was reform or revolution.

Two events typified the new year 1883. Swami Dayananda Saraswati, a leader of renaissance, was at the end of his earthly pilgrimage, and Krantiveer Wasudeo Balwant, a man of great action, laid his bones in Aden longing for the establishment of an Indian Republic. In such a tense atmosphere surcharged with unfulfilled aspirations was born Swatantrya Veer Vinayak Damodar Savarkar on Monday, the 28th May 1883, at 10 p.m. at Bhagur, a village near Nasik. The aims and aspirations of the Swami and Krantiveer were to be unified in a great idea, new voice and new nationalism. Seventy-five days before this birth, Karl Marx, the Prophet of the Proletariat, passed away unnoticed in a London corner and sixty-two days after this birth was born Benito Mussolini who later moulded the destiny of Italy.

Savarkar springs from the illustrious clan of Chitpavan Brahmins that produced Nanasahib of 1857, Wasudeo Balwant and Lokamanya Tilak, all of whom strove to snatch the crown of Independence from the hands of the British. The Savarkars originally came from the Konkan, a land symbolising the great feat of reclamation performed by Parshuram who is a mighty mythological figure. During the declining days of the Peshwa rule, the Savarkars were an important family which had moved in and seen great events. They were Jahgirdars of a small village, Rahuri, and enjoyed the honour of palanquin for their acknowledged eminence in Sanskrit scholarship. The blood, bones and brains of such ancestors carved out this epic figure of Indian Revolution, Vinayak Savarkar, who, like Mazzini, ushered in the revolutionary war of liberation in the annals of Hindusthan. And it is to be noted that, as, with the rise of Mazzini, the Austrian rule over Italy began to wane, so with the rise of De Valera and Savarkar the British Empire began to wither and vanish.

II

A man of position and personality, Vinayak's father, Damodarpant Savarkar, was well-built, studious, stern and self-respecting. In spite of his English education he loved and remembered his past. He was gifted with poetical talents and was a good conversationalist. What is more, he was an admirer of Tilak. Damodarpant's firm and undemonstrative temperament did not stand any nonsense from his children. Vinayak's mother, Radhabai, was a pious, lovely and bright lady known for the tenderness of her heart. Of these parents were born three sons and one daughter. The first was Ganesh, the second Vinayak, the hero of this biography, the third was a daughter named Mainabai and the fourth was Narayan.

Damodarpant was a good-natured and religious-minded man. He recited the epics *Mahabharata* and *Ramayana* and read out to his sons Ballads and *Bakhars* on Pratap, Shivaji and the Peshwas. He was a warm admirer of Homer and had studied and read Pope's translation of the *Iliad* to his sons. It was the practice of Savarkar's mother to make her eldest son read chapters from the *Mahabharata* or the *Ramayana* to her children before they retired to bed. Thus the Ballads, *Bakhars*, legends, heroic exploits, historical episodes and mythological stories powerfully contributed to the mental development of child Savarkar.

Vinayak, the infant Jahgirdar, was sent to the village school at the age of six. Soon he showed signs of his remarkable inborn genius. Much of his inspiration he found in history and epics. His love of books and newspapers was so great that he read omnivorously, and any book or newspaper that he laid his hand upon, he read from cover to cover. His studies were intense, exciting and prolonged. His depth and intelligence and the immense interest he took in human affairs can be judged from one incident. While reading the history of the Arabs, he asked his father about the first pages of their history. The first pages of the book were missing. Naturally the father replied that they might have been torn off. What the boy, in fact, wanted to know was the antecedents of the Arabs. The range and loftiness of this idea touched the infinite Universe. Savarkar depicted this idea in one of his

latter-day poems and concluded that the first pages of all history are always unknown! This is the curse on history, he added.

Vinayak was hardly ten when well-known newspapers from Poona accepted his poems, not knowing that the contributions came from a precocious lad. His insatiable thirst for knowledge, his excellent memory and the peculiar charm in his voice and gait impressed every one and raised high hopes of his future. Damodarpant saw something new and extraordinary in his son that startled him. He was terribly alarmed when one day he saw his son reading the *Upanishads* in the house; for, reading the *Upanishads* in a house, it is said, forebodes evil for the reader's worldly life. They are to be read and studied in the woods!

Witty, bold and handsome, Vinayak was also full of pranks. He once broke the bangles of his sister, and was shielded by his elder brother in the safe from the wrath of his father. In his boyhood he learnt archery and riding. To the horror of his companions he once caught a serpent with a piece of wire in his hand.

A man is seen at his best in his childhood. Milton says that childhood shows the man, as the morning shows the day. Here is an index to the life-book of Savarkar. In June 1893, serious riots broke between Hindus and Muslims in the Azamgarh District of the United Provinces and in August of the same year in Bombay. The news of the atrocities then perpetrated on the Hindus in the United Provinces and Bombay fired his blood and he resolved to avenge the woes and deaths of his co-religionists. The boy Savarkar led a batch of selected school-mates in a march upon the village mosque. The battalion of these boys showered stones upon it, shattered its windows and tiles and returned victorious. This incident gives the first hint of the heroic mettle Vinayak was made of and the key to his future daring life and leadership. The victory, however, was not allowed to go unchallenged. The Muslim school-boys gave battle to Vinayak, the Hindu Generalissimo. Although the number of his soldiers decreased at the time of joining the battle, Vinayak routed the enemy with missiles like pins, penknives and thorns with which he had equipped his army. The battle had its lesson. The boy

leader fell to training and organising his group. For the military training the group was divided into two detachments —one Hindu and the other a British or a Muslim—to defend a field or a compound. Always the Hindus won and the Muslims or the British lost in the mock fights and warfare.

Vinayak completed his Primary Education at the village school, and moved to Nasik with his elder brother for high-school education. In the meanwhile, misfortune overtook the family. Radhabai, Vinayak's mother, died of cholera, leaving the children to the care of her husband. At the time of this first calamity Vinayak was hardly ten. He was passionately devoted to his mother, and so he felt the loss terribly. Henceforward his father worked from dawn to dead of night, personally discharging the household duties and tending the small ones affectionately.

In every life there are certain momentous incidents that decide the fate or change the mode of one's life. A frustrated and penniless mutineer from Piedmont asked alms of Mazzini in the name of the outlaws of Italy. That was the moment of Mazzini's conversion and dedication to the struggle for his country's Independence. Such an occasion occurred in boy Savarkar's life, too. It made an indelible impression on his mind. Those were the times full of horrid tales. People of Maharashtra stood between famine and death, plague and soldiers, the devil and the deep sea, as it were. The harassment caused by the rigid segregation camps during the plague epidemic, the strict quarantines, the dreadful plague hospitals, the reckless burning of properties and the outrages on women reached a climax. The patience of the people was wearing out. Tilak warned Lord Sandhurst's Government that they should not drive the people to desperation.

These countless miseries of the famine and plague-stricken masses and the excesses committed by the soldiers infuriated the Chaphekar brothers of Poona, and they shot dead the Plague Commissioner, Mr. Rand, the bullying incompetent tyrant and one Mr. Ayerst on June 22, 1897, in Poona, the traditional cradle of the liberators of Hindusthan. That was the 'auspicious' day of the Diamond Jubilee of Queen Victoria's rule. The day was to be celebrated despite the grinding famine and raging plague. And the celebration was

performed in Poona in such a way that the whole country became ablaze with the performance which electrified the Indian people. Once again Poona proved the historical law that repression, injustice and racial humiliation give rise to violent reaction that recoils on the head of the aggressor. As a result of this assassination, though outwardly on a charge of publishing seditious articles, Tilak was thrown behind the bars. Betrayed by the Dravid brothers, Damodarpant Chaphekar was arrested, tried and sentenced to death. He embraced gallows with the *Gita* in his hands on April 18, 1898.

But in a slave country struggling for freedom such abnormal times have a knack of feeling the pulse of a nation and of showing up simpletons and sycophants and separating traitors from patriots. And nine out of ten informants in such a country rarely go unpunished. Consequently one night with the stroke of the city gun at nine, went out two bullets and the Dravid brothers of Poona, the informants in the Chaphekar trial, were shot dead in the street by the junior Chaphekar, Vasudeo and his friend Ranade, nephew of the historian Rajwade. This brave youth Chaphekar, his another brother, Balkrishna, and Ranade were also hanged in May 1899. The end of the Chaphekar brothers marks a turning point in the history of freedom movement of India; for they proved to be the harbingers of the coming revolutionary movement in India.

In the meanwhile, Vinayak had an attack of small-pox at Nasik and he was back to Bhagur. There the horrible news about Chaphekars' heroic end fell upon Vinayak's ears. It drove the boy Savarkar to a grim resolve. He approached the family Deity, Durga, the *Ashtapraharana Dharini*, in the sanctuary and invoked the blessings of the Great Mother, the source of divine inspiration and strength. Sitting at the feet of the armed Goddess Durga at dead of night, he took a vow of striving nobly and sacrificing his nearest and dearest, his life and all, to fulfil the incomplete mission of the martyred Chaphekars. He vowed to drive out the Britishers from his beloved Motherland and to make her free and great once again. It was the glorious vow of Shivaji. Shivaji the Great took his vow of liberating his country from foreign domination at the age of sixteen in the temple of Rohideshwar. Tilak

took to political agitation at about five-and-twenty after finishing his college education. Mazzini entered politics at the age of seventeen, and De Valera, who was born a year before Savarkar, at thirty, but Savarkar entered politics and took the vow of liberating his Motherland when he was hardly sixteen. So sincere, inspired and spontaneous was the love for his country burning in his heart!

To stir up his comrades and people Savarkar composed one night a ballad over the martyred Chaphekars. His face glowed. Tears rolled down his cheeks as he pored over his lines. Hearing the sobs, his father woke up and found his son sitting far into the night by the lamp. He read the lines of the ballad and clouds shadowed his face. The father scented a new danger and tried to dissuade his son from those daring thoughts of martyrdom at so early an age. He gently patted Vinayak on his back and advised him to take to some light songs. The father at once understood what those dripping lines, their spirit and their flash would mean to their author and his family.

At Nasik Vinayak's academic career was not extraordinary. However, the depth of his knowledge and the fire of his eloquence had been spread far and wide by his teachers. While a junior high-school student, his article on 'The Glory of Hindusthan' appeared in two parts as an editorial in the local paper, *Nasik Vaibhav*. With the great flow of his words, breadth of his knowledge and boldness of his views, he easily towered above all in the elocution competitions. Astounded at the range of his knowledge and power of his speech, the judges at first doubted the originality of his views, but subsequently were glad to own their mistakes. Vinayak's poems of welcome to Maharshi Ranade and Tilak and the several ballads he composed during these years for the village chorus also won him reputation.

In 1899 Vinayak's father and uncle succumbed to plague. Vinayak's younger brother Narayan was also attacked by plague. He was removed first to a dilapidated temple on the outskirts of Bhagur and then to the Nasik Plague Hospital where Ganeshpant, *alias* Babarao, looked after him even at the risk of his own life. Fear lurked in Vinayak's mind that Babarao might also catch the infection. And one day it did

so happen. Vinayak was terribly shocked. Boy as he was, he burst into tears in a corner, but he did not give out a word of it to Babarao's young wife. The stuff of his courage was that of a man who stamps his mind upon history. Death was on the prowl in Nasik which had become the city of the dead. In this haunted and deserted city Vinayak passed his days and nights with heart-throbs fearing to hear bad news about his brothers who were writhing with deadly pain in the hospital. At last the danger was over. Both the brothers recovered and returned, and were once more united in a happy home.

III

Stars shine out at night. Although Vinayak's mind was filled with these great anxieties, his vow would not let him sit alone. He was restless. He had a purpose in life and it was the liberation of his Motherland from the foreign yoke. He mused on it by day, dreamt about it by night, and he was waiting for an opportunity to throw himself into his life's mission with all the strength of his mind and muscle. Shakespeare has described such a powerful mind in these beautiful lines :

> " The force of his own merit makes his way,
> A gift that heaven gives for him."

With that end in view Vinayak made friends with Mhaskar and Page, new friends of Babarao, at Nasik. Simple, hard-working, credulous, Babarao was as great an obliging man as he was a propagandist. Babarao's selfless service won the goodwill and affection of many persons and families. Among the new additions were Mhaskar and Page. Sober and sincere, they were both patriotic workers in the background as are most men in Government service. In action they were Tilakites and in thought they were drawn to the revolutionary ideas of Shivrampant Paranjpe. The political views of Paranjpe were the burning thoughts of the boy Savarkar. Paranjpe and Savarkar were politically parallel, but socially poles apart. Both were orators. The elder orator was a master of satire, the younger was a live volcano. While

Paranjpe was the dream of revolution, Savarkar was its living reality.

After long debates and varied discussions Vinayak won Paranjpe's followers over to his side, administered to them the vow, and formed a Patriots' Group of three members. This Group, established in 1899, soon assumed the shape of a Friends' Union called 'Mitra Mela' at the beginning of 1900. Chosen youths of merit and mettle were secretly initiated into this fold. This was the famous 'Beehive', in the words of Sir Valentine Chirol, of revolutionaries in Western India! The Mitra Mela sprouted into the world-famous Abhinava Bharat in 1904, its network was spread over Western and Central India and subsequently its branches in the form of the Ghadr Party resounded in England, France, Germany, America, Hong-Kong, Singapore and Burma with their heroic deeds and risings like the Komagata Maru episode. The aim and ideal of the Mitra Mela was absolute political Independence of India, and it emphatically asserted that such an independence could be won, if need be, by an armed revolt. Its watchward was instruction and insurrection.

The organisation started. By diffusing knowledge, dispelling doubts and ignorance of the members and inspiring them with the noble aim, its young leader Vinayak Savarkar vitalised the gilded youths and the intellectual vagabonds, and brought the best out of them. He gave them aim, form, means and ways. Those innocent and reckless youths were converted into a batch of patriots and a galaxy of martyrs who afterwards made history.

The new patriotic and political atmosphere transformed the city into a living force of a political volcano. The Mitra Mela dominated all public and political institutions of Nasik, changed religious functions and festivals into political and national celebrations. These activities of the Mitra Mela gave sleepless nights to the District authorities. The Mitra Mela re-sanctified and revitalised the life of Nasik which had grown stale, insipid and hapless.

Nasik has played a very important role in India's ancient and modern history. This southern Kashi stands on the bank of the Godavari and is the place where Sri Ramchandra passed his voluntary exile resulting from his eternal devotion

to his father. It was from Nasik that Sri Ramchandra started on his great march to annihilate the tyranny of Ravan. It was here that Ramchandra and Laxman cut the *Nasika*—nose—of the demoness Shurpanakha. Strange to say, Savarkar started his war of Independence for the liberation of his people in Nasik, cut off the nose of the British Imperialism and was later on exiled for his deathless devotion to his Fatherland, changing Nasik into the new Jerusalem of Revolutionary India.

During the weekly meetings of the Mitra Mela sometimes there were hot and lively discussions. On the eve of the accession of King Edward VII in 1901, a debate was held to consider whether they should hold a condolence meeting for the death of Queen Victoria and to declare allegiance to King Edward or not. Mhaskar and Page were in favour of declaring allegiance in order to allay the suspicions of the Government. There was a battle royal. Savarkar asked: "King or Queen, the question is whose king is he. England's Queen or King is the Queen or King of our enemies. To declare allegiance to such a King or Queen is not allegiance. It will be the Bible of slavery!" Ultimately it was decided to oppose both the moves. While Vinayak was at Kothur, a speaker at one meeting extolled King Edward VII as 'our father'. Within an hour of this meeting posters appeared in the village from nowhere and bitingly queried: "Then what relation does your father bear to your mother?"

Vinayak's charming personality, his voracious reading, his trenchant views and inspiring thoughts electrified his colleagues. They devotedly took to heart the teachings and preachings of the leader. The precepts were thenceforth no more abstract ideas. They were an everyday guidance and moving force in the daily life of Nasik. Vinayak created in his followers a liking for reading, debating and physical training to make worthy and noble sacrifices, if need should arise. He himself took physical exercise—*Namaskars*—till the perspiration from his body left his mark on the ground. In later life, however, he opined that moderate exercise consolidates and strengthens the body.

Members of the Mitra Mela served the city in many useful ways. They chastised the tyrannical elements and

brow-beat the bully. Those were the days occasionally smitten with terrible plague that reduced families to ashes, and razed houses to the ground. It was a dreadful sight. The cries of the dying men, women and children, the groans of the afflicted and the wailings of their relations were too shocking for these budding youths. There was paucity of men to carry the corpses to the cremation ground. This band of youths carried the dead all day long. Vinayak also shared the toilsome task. One night thoroughly fagged out, young Vinayak fell asleep in the cemetery unnoticed and was left behind.

Another prominent cast of Vinayak Savarkar's leadership was that he knew no caste distinctions. To him all Hindus were equal. Those of his countrymen who were prepared to sacrifice their lives on the altar of freedom were his comrades. He shared his food with Maratha families and broke his bread under their roof. His attractive figure and engaging manners inspired respect and individual devotion in his circle. He was popular but by nature reserved and rather shy. He was amongst them but not of them and so he sometimes retired secretly to some sequestered corner to hold, as he put it, "the Parliament of his mind"! His dress consisted of a dhoti, a coat, a jacket and a cap with a line of embroidery in the middle.

The heart of Vinayak's poems and patriotism in those days was the resurrection and liberation of Hindusthan. In one of his poems composed at this stage of his life he says: "O Aryan brothers, arise." Elsewhere he says: "For the uplift of Aryan Race and Aryan Land, better to keep it in one unit grand." At another place he observes: "Follow the laws of Nature. Little drops of water make the pond. Organise all Hindus and unify them." These lines are the best interpreters of his thoughts as the words 'Arya' or 'Hindu' and 'One Unit' are the rallying-points of his ideology.

The influence the Mitra Mela exercised upon the poetry and politics of Maharashtra was of great magnitude. With a little hyperbole it may be said that the Mitra Mela was a University. Its songs of freedom and its tales of the lives of the makers of world history inspired the students with a great vision, and infused vitality in their bones. Choirs were formed. They fed and fanned the flames of the passions of the people

with revolutionary ideas. It was a group of these singers from Nasik that sang a ballad later on at the historic Fort Raigad in the presence of Tilak, making the Father of Indian Unrest quite restless.

Poets, speakers, propagandists, patriots and martyrs were produced by the Mitra Mela in scores. Out of such luminaries came the poet Govind Trimbak Darekar of Maharashtra. A Maratha by caste, his popular name was Aba. He was lame. The young poet was richly gifted, but was unlettered and therefore unacquainted with the rules of composition. Savarkar tutored him and Aba Darekar became Poet Govind, the famous revolutionary poet of Maharashtra. If Savarkar's Ganges and Govind's Godavari were taken away from the sea of Maharashtrian Poetry, what Marathi Poetry would remain on Patriotism and Martyrdom ?

It is remarkable to note that though mostly engaged in the propagation of his ideals, Savarkar never had a failure in his school career. As a rule his colleagues and he were very particular about their success in examinations. Nor were they ever a whit behind their class. But to Savarkar life being an oblation, he, like Tilak, cared more for the service of his Motherland than for academic distinctions. Yet his preparations were extraordinary. The prodigy that he was, his head was a storehouse of world history, an encyclopædia of political and social revolutions and revolutionary figures. Few professors, even at fifty, could rival the sweep, breadth and depth of his vast knowledge. He had mastered the poets Ramdas, Moropant and Mukteshwar and proficiently compared and contrasted them in literary circles. One of the articles entitled, 'Who was the Greatest Peshwa', written for a competition carried away the prize. It may be mentioned here that this was recently prescribed by the Bombay University for the Matriculation Examination. Savarkar has brought out in this article the brilliance and great leadership of the Peshwa Madhavrao I. Thus, before entering the Fergusson College, Poona, young Savarkar was a first rate debater, a powerful orator, a rising writer and a leader of a revolutionary organisation which was creeping over all villages and towns in the District.

A few months before Savarkar's Matriculation Examination, there occurred an important event in his life. Savarkar was married to the eldest daughter of Sri Trimbak Ramchandra Chiplunkar *alias* Bhaurao, who knew Savarkar from childhood. Noble and kind-hearted, Bhaurao was a tall and attractive figure. He loved riding and hunting. Being a *Karbhari* in the Jawahar State he wielded much influence in the State. The most important part the marriage played in Savarkar's life was that it solved the problem of his University education which had absorbed the attention of Babarao Savarkar for the previous five or six months. For Babarao was to Vinayak, what Baliram was to Krishna or Chimaji to Bajirao I.

After the premature death of their mother and untimely death of their father, the burden of the family fell upon Babarao's shoulders. He had to struggle valiantly to keep the wolf from the door and to drive the household chariot along the right path of revolution. That showed his mettle and unbounded attachment to his brothers for whom he sacrificed his personal ambition. To tell the truth, Babarao would have been a great *yogin* had he not subordinated his future to that of his younger brother. Even as a boy, Babarao believed fervently that his younger brother was born with a mission for liberating his Motherland, that his uncommon genius and his great faith would bring about a political revolution in Hindusthan and that he would win back her lost freedom. This belief revolutionised his whole being. The family was in straightened circumstances and disturbed conditions owing to a theft committed in their house. Still Babarao vowed before his ailing and anxious "Tatya" that, come what might, he would send him to the University. On his part Vinayak passed the Public Service Examination and was ready to enter Government service, if need arose. But Sri Bhaurao Chiplunkar promised help, fulfilled the promise and relieved Babarao of his anxiety. Savarkar's regard for his generous father-in-law approached reverence. Years after, through the airhole of the dark cell in the Andamans, he sighed his grateful tributes to Bhaurao Chiplunkar in these

words: "If there be any man or any family next to dear Baba to whom I owe all that is best in me and owing to whose noble patronage and winning solicitude I had unusual chances and facilities of assimilating the noblest things of this world and even of doing something for our common Motherland, then that man and that family is theirs (Chiplunkars')."

CHAPTER II

The Rising Leader

I

Savarkar passed his Matriculation Examination in December 1901, and left Nasik for Poona in January 1902. What was the state of Poona? Exactly a year before Poona had lost Mahadeo Govind Ranade, India's foremost torchbearer of learning and light. Ranade was a great social reformer, a towering scholar, an ardent patriot, a renowned thinker, an eminent economist and an exemplary judge. He was the foremost torchbearer of a new age, and wished to build a social structure conforming to the demands of fresh ideas. Though not strictly a Congressman his word was law in every annual session of the Indian National Congress of his day. His political ideal for India was, in his own words: "A federated India distributed according to nationalities and subjected to a common bond of connection with the Imperial Power of the Queen-Empress of India." [1] Sri R. P. Paranjpe had just returned from England with a dazzling success in his academic career. Gokhale was about to leave the Fergusson College and enter upon a political career. Tilak was becoming a formidable leader. Shivrampant Paranjpe was a dominating figure with his magic pen and marvellous oratory.

As to the political state of India, the Congress was the spokesman. From its inception upto 1906 the Moderates dominated the Congress. Its stalwarts, from Surendranath Banerjee to Pherozeshah Mehta and Gokhale, believed with Ranade in the inscrutable "dispensation of Almighty God for the unification of our peoples and the permanence of British Rule in India." [2]

Savarkar joined the Fergusson College, Poona, in January 1902. Poona was then the living heart, and the Fergusson College, the Harrow of Maharashtra, in traditions and in producing historic personalities. As soon as Savarkar was in

[1] Ganesh & Co., Publishers, Madras, *The Indian Nation Builders*, p. 8.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 74.

the College, he directed his attention to sowing the seeds of revolutionary doctrines in the fountain-head of Maharashtra. On the eve of his departure for Poona in a send-off at Nasik he had expressed the hope that at Poona he would inspire the pick of Maharashtrian youth with revolutionary thoughts and spread the revolutionary tenets through them over all the Districts of Maharashtra.

A youth of power and purpose, Savarkar could easily make his mark in the college. His fellow-students could not but feel the impact of his striking personality. His qualities of head and heart were great. He had entered Poona with a stock of reading, a gift for writing, and a genius for oratory such as few students of this century possess. He was much advanced in classical, historical and political literature. Even the professors who turned up their noses at his extreme political views could not help praising him. As a member of the college residency it was convenient for him to gauge his fellow-students and gain their confidence. Soon a Savarkar group was formed. This band of purposeful youths captured almost all departments of the college institutions from the Dining Club to the Library. It was a patriots' group, studious, thoughtful, sober, aspiring and yet greatly obliging.

The group started a hand-written weekly named the *Aryan Weekly*, in which Savarkar often wrote illuminating articles on patriotism, literature, history and science with ease and elegance. Some of the thought-provoking articles from this weekly found their way even into local weeklies and newspapers of Poona. One of those brilliant articles of Savarkar was "Saptapadi" in which he had dealt with the seven stages of evolution that have to be gone through by a subject nation. He had studied all the dramas of Kalidas and Bhavabhuti and in one essay he brilliantly compared and contrasted Kalidas with Bhavabhuti with remarkable originality. His professor highly praised him for this illuminating essay. Of the English poets, Scott, Shakespeare and Milton influenced him much. Milton's *Paradise Lost* almost fascinated him. He had learnt by heart some of its cantos. Later on, he used blank verse metre for a part of his epic poetry. His essay on the *Ramayana* and the *Iliad* similarly evoked appreciative remarks for his erudition from Prof. Patwardhan.

Savarkar often gave scholarly talks on the history of the world, the revolutions in Italy, Netherlands, America and gave his colleagues an idea of the stress and struggle those countries had to undergo for winning back their lost freedom. The young Demosthenes in Savarkar had captivated students and professors. On important occasions and at the main functions in the college all flocked to hear his stirring speeches. One day he delivered a lecture on the history of Italy under the chairmanship of Principal Rajwade. He was mightily pleased with Savarkar s range of knowledge and his oratorical gifts although he disliked Savarkar's reference to modern politics. In an article the late Sri Gopal Govind Mujumdar, *alias* 'Poet Sadhudas', has very well described Savarkar's hold on the college environments. In 1903, at the opening of the new session of the college a meeting was held in the college hall. Prof. Bhanu was in the chair. After the introductory speech of Prof. Bhate, Savarkar in his black coat and black cap rose amidst a deafening applause. He reminded his audience of the glorious past and his speech bewailed the loss of freedom. A wave of emotion swept over the audience. His speech infused courage into the craven-hearted and fired them all with the spirit of patriotism moving every one to tears. Then the chairman rose and with a grave face threw a wet blanket over the excited feelings. He said: "Young men, you need not take Savarkar seriously! He is a Devil!" In those days a fearless, patriotic and brilliant youth of independent nature was described in this manner. In his college days Tilak, too, was known as a Devil [1] and the Blunt! Poor Prof. Bhanu! His bookish knowledge could not distinguish a deliverer from a devil.

The Savarkar Group dressed alike, used swadeshi, took an evening stroll together, and carried discussions in old temples and in the hearts of hills about their problems and plans. At the same time the group never failed to attend to the prescribed course of studies. They took care of their moral, physical and intellectual developments. Out of the armoury of this group sprang a host of literary and political figures who served the cause of Indian freedom. They believed in energy and endurance and not in enjoyment. Their ideal of life was not

[1] A. W. Marathe, *Lokamanya Tilak* (Marathi), p. 12.

cricket. Their goal was survival of the fittest! Yet Savarkar was not without his lighter moments and at times enjoyed them fully. He played an important part in a Shakespearian play staged by the Fergussonians.

In the public activities of Poona also Savarkar took a prominent part. His relations with Shivrampant Paranjpe, the most popular orator and brilliant editor of the *Kal*, were of a very cordial nature. While a high school student he was occasionally in correspondence with Paranjpe. Once student Savarkar had expressed his desire for being given a job of a sub-editor, or even that of a compositor in the office of the *Kal* just to enable him to have university education. But the proposal, it seems, was dropped partly for want of an encouraging reply or owing to the promised help by Savarkar's father-in-law. Savarkar first saw Paranjpe in Poona in 1902. Paranjpe's revolutionary ideas were nearer to the aim of Savarkar. Although the mould of their fervid patriotism was the same, it stemmed from different souls. Savarkar's thoughts were deep-rooted, unbending and powerful and had a broader base and a wider range than those of Paranjpe.

On important occasions young Savarkar saw Tilak whose association with the revolutionaries was a legend. Tilak's superb insight had sensed the stuff of which Savarkar was made. Savarkar, by this time, was an acknowledged leader of youths.

II

A change in the political tone was coming on with the growing tension. A new spirit of self-reliance began to gain ground. Tilak was turning the eyes of India from the British public to the Indian masses for her own salvation. Stimulated by these feelings Lala Lajpat Rai appealed to Indians to become arbiters of their own destiny. Inspired by the epoch-making victory of Asiatic Japan over European Russia, Surendranath Banerjee encouraged the people with these words: "The sun has risen in the East. Japan has saluted the rising sun. That sun, in its meridian splendour, will pass through our country."[1] Gokhale characterised the partition

[1] Ganesh & Co., Publishers, *The Indian Nation Builders*, p. 93.

of Bengal as a cruel wrong inflicted upon our Bengali brethren. The love of country and the feeling of united India was rising. Simultaneously, the Swadeshi movement was also gaining ground.

The opposition to the partition of Bengal was coming to a head by October 1905. The partition of Bengal awakened the dormant forces of nationalism and the sleeping embers of communalism. As it was a move to counter the politically dominant Hindus by a creation of an Eastern Bengal, Hindus opposed and Muslims supported it! Strangely enough, the fate of Bengal has indeed not been a covetable one throughout the last two centuries. Bengal was the stronghold of the Mogul Empire. Bengal was the keystone of the arch of the British Empire. Bengal has been the grazing ground for conversions and communal riots. Bengal has recently been the foundation of a Muslim Sovereign State!

By now Savarkar had developed into a prominent figure in the political and social gatherings and meetings of Poona and had won the hearts of the public of Poona. Acharya Kaka Kalelkar [1] tells us that Savarkar's stirring eloquence was a great attraction to the public of Poona in those days. Savarkar and his group were ardent promoters of Swadeshi and staunch opponents of the partition scheme. Tilak had made the partition of Bengal an all-India issue. Savarkar resolved to unfurl the banner of boycott of foreign goods; for boycott and Swadeshi were the obverse and the reverse of one and the same coin! Representing the student at one meeting he, therefore, suggested that they should make a bonfire of foreign clothes. Sri N. C. Kelkar was in the chair. Shivrampant Paranjpe who was also present at the meeting supported Savarkar. Savarkar also saw Tilak who was out of Poona on the day of the meeting. Tilak, too, agreed, but on one condition. He insisted that at least the heap of clothes should be a huge one. Savarkar readily took the task upon himself. With his moving oratory he provoked the people to the deed and with a cartful of clothes the procession started wending its way along the Reay Market and proceeded to the open field across the Lakdi Pool. Tilak joined it at the termination. At the conclusion of the procession Tilak opined that the

[1] Kaka Kalelkar, *The Pratibha*, dated 15-1-1936.

clothes should be burnt there and speeches should be made somewhere else. But Savarkar reasoned, "Then why this procession? We could have sent clothes here and made speeches at the Reay Market. In fact, glowing speeches should be delivered before the burning heap! That will have a deep impression on the minds of the people," he argued. Tilak cared more for youthful vigour and so he agreed. The meeting then commenced around the glowing heap. Tilak thundered; Paranjpe opened the vials of his satire and his speech became more scorching than the fire itself. As ordained by Tilak the youths left the place after the fire was completely extinguished. Later on when N. C. Kelkar remarked that economically the bonfire was a waste, Savarkar gently retorted that the spark it would light would be mentally and morally more valuable and lasting.

Thus Poona had the first bonfire of foreign cloth in India! Its flames whirled high up in the sky and the noise echoed throughout the length and breadth of India. Hatred of British domination was rising and Savarkar added fuel to the fire of hatred. In his later life Kelkar often mentioned that the speeches made in those days by Savarkar left an indelible imprint on his memory for a good many years. Even the police reporters were enamoured of his gift of the gab. Describing Savarkar's speech at the Sarvajanik Sabha in Poona one reporter says: "It was so dexterous! so triumphant! He is at the most twenty-two, but he is already an accomplished orator of an enviable rank."

The flames of the bonfire also scorched the heads of the Fergusson College. These fearless views and deeds of Savarkar were fiery enough to burn their relations with the Bombay University. The leading part played by this fiery youth in the bonfire affair turned their moderate heads, and R. P. Paranjpe, the then Principal, fined Savarkar Rs. 10 and expelled him from the college residency. Two crosses now glorified Savarkar's lion-like chest. He was the first Indian leader to make a bonfire of foreign cloth in India and the first Indian student who was rusticated from a Government-aided institution. The reaction was wide and virulent. Tilak denounced this action on the part of the college authorities and declared: "They are not our Gurus." Almost all patriotic

papers condemned this unwise step taken by the college authorities. A wave of indignation passed all over Maharashtra. Sympathy and money poured in. Savarkar paid the fine from the fund and donated the balance towards the Industrial Fund known as the *Paisa Fund.*

In one respect this incident is significant, for it marked the fight between two coming ideologies which continued in Indian politics for years to come. Gandhiji from South Africa criticised the bonfire, as, even for twenty years thereafter, he hugged the belief that boycott movement had its roots in hatred and violence. And Gandhiji was not far away from his Guru in this opinion. Gokhale said in his Presidential Address at the Benares Congress in 1905: "It is well to remember that the term 'boycott', owing to its origin, has got unsavoury associations, and it conveys to the mind before everything else a vindictive desire to injure another. Such a desire on our part, as a normal feature of our relations with England, is of course out of the question."

The Moderates tried, but failed in winning over Savarkar to their side. Savarkar had great regard for Gokhale's great talents and profound patriotism, but he differed from him fundamentally and temperamentally as well. The feelings and opinions of the professors, who were mostly Moderates, about Savarkar were mingled with awe and aversion. For their part they respected his intellectual powers, admired his fervid oratory, but detested his revolutionary views. One of them, Prof. Patwardhan, foretold that Savarkar was bound to be a great demagogue. Time has its revenge. Thirty-eight years later presiding over the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of his disciple Savarkar, Sir R. P. Paranjpe said with pride: "In his younger days as I knew him, Savarkar was marked by a keen intellect, fervid eloquence, great fluency in writing and magnetic personality. I remember his patriotism was intense, but as is natural to young men, it was based entirely on strong emotions not much regulated by cold reason."

Paranjpe is only a great mathematician statesman. And an extraordinary personality like Savarkar lies beyond the pale of the general enunciation of his theorem as put in the last line of his speech. Indeed if there is any great revolutionary leader worth the name in the history of revolutions

whose emotions are regulated by cool reason, it is Savarkar. This can be proved by citing occasions on which he bridled the emotions and thoughtless daring plans of his lieutenants. Moreover, if you are to be a leader of action or revolution, you must raise your reason to a certain pitch of emotion. Otherwise your reason will forget that you have to lead, leap and lift and will rust!

While these turbulent and tumultuous days were rolling by, Savarkar's B.A. Examination was fast approaching. As was always customary with him, he studied day and night at the fag end of the year, made up all the studies in the last two months, appeared for the examination and to the joy and jubilations of the public came out successful. Congratulations from all parts of Maharashtra were showered upon him. It was not his personal triumph only. It was also the success of the youth movement and the advancing tide of nationalism.

In the meanwhile Savarkar the prolific writer was coming to the front. His famous ballads on Tanaji and Baji Prabhu, the heroes of the Maratha history, were penned during this period. The ballads were proscribed, but they attained the popularity of folk songs in Maharashtra during the last four decades until at last they were restored in Free India. His lyric of patriotism, his inspiring songs of heroes, his ballads and hymns thrilled clubs and kitchens, schools and choruses and meetings, and he was hailed as a bard of Freedom or a rebel poet. His famous poem on Widowhood of Hindu ladies dealt severely with unjust customs and cruel traditions, and brought out a very touching picture of the child widow, attacking the brutal desires of old bridegrooms.

The charm of the poem was so irresistible that even men like Kaka Kalelkar remember it today. In this poem one finds the seeds of the great social reformer in Savarkar. The poem won the prize in the competition for which it was meant, the other rival sharing half the prize. "What is everlasting in this world?" Savarkar asks in another poem. He sings: "The sun sets, the sea ebbs. All things rise and fall." In this Savarkar hinted at the sure downfall of the British Empire. That there is an end to everything is an eternal truth.

During the same period Savarkar wrote many memorable

articles and brilliant essays. Among the important essays ranks, "Why should we celebrate the festival of historic personalities?" This was a prize article. In this thought-provoking and brilliant essay one is impressed by his profound thinking, the historical deductions he has arrived at, and the sweep of his originality. He concludes his essay in a grand peroration: "Why, then, should the historical functions be celebrated? To pay our national gratitude we owe to those heroic souls. They should be celebrated as a mark of reverence and remembrance of the immense good those benevolent men have done to the world, because they have sacred sanction of ancient traditions. They are the clouds which shower the nectar of instruction. They are the monuments of virtues. They are the chemicals that act as an incentive to human thoughts and feelings. They are the preceptors who impart virtuous instruction to the youths. They are the living history of the deeds of noble heroes. Functions in their honour should be celebrated because of this. There are so many advantages and definitely no disadvantages. Especially we, Hindus, should take to these functions for emerging out of the present degraded state which was the result of want of self-respect and dutifulness. For, that is the only easy and sure path to the prosperity of the nation."

Savarkar wrote brilliant prose. His imagination soared high up in the sky on the wings of an eagle. It aspired to emulate the loftiness of the Himalayas. It visualised "the Himalayas towering above the roof of the world to see whether there was any other country under the sun as captivating as Hindusthan. Elated at not finding on earth an equal of Hindusthan, he opened the apartments of the heavens. But there, O Aryan Land, instead of finding your equal, he found something else. Enamoured of the snow-clad peaks of the Himalayas, the nymphs and the virgin attendants of the Gods clung to his neck and deserting the capital of Indra, they lived with him." "The diamonds and jewels," proceeds Savarkar, "O, Aryan Mother, you have preserved for us in the mines can easily crowd to overflowing a ship made of this vast world."

One thing more and of tremendous significance. In 1902 Savarkar had written in the *Kal* one essay which he concluded with a prophetic vision. He stated therein: "Hindus are

responsible for the poverty and disorderliness of Hindusthan. But if they ever desire to attain prosperity, they must remain as Hindus." This deep-rooted, farsighted and fundamentally original characteristic of Savarkar's outlook differentiated him from Tilak and Shivrampant Paranjpe.

III

Savarkar's secret organisational work had not stopped during those days. While at college he had convened in 1904 a meeting of some two hundred selected members of the Mitra Mela. In an atmosphere filled with grandeur and religiosity, the name of the Revolutionary Party was changed from the Mitra Mela to the Abhinava Bharat. Now the party girded up its loins to extend its political and revolutionary activities and influence, spread its net all over India, and assume the responsibility of a revolution on an all-Bharat scale.

After passing his B.A. in December 1905, Savarkar went to Bombay to study law. He had already passed his first LL.B. in 1904, in Poona. In Bombay he organised youths from different colleges. He had also propaganda meetings in chawls. Sri Bal Gangadhar Kher, who later became the first Premier of Bombay under the 1935 Government of India Act, was one of those youths who came under the influence of the leader of the Abhinava Bharat. Kher was an initiate of the Abhinava Bharat. It was in Poona that Sri J. B. Kripalani, an ex-President of the Indian National Congress, was initiated into the Abhinava Bharat while he was a student in the Deccan College. Hundreds of youths now joined the organisation.

While in Bombay Savarkar contributed to the *Vihari*, a local Marathi Weekly and made it the mouth-piece of the Abhinava Bharat. Its circulation grew by leaps and bounds, like its fiery sister weekly, the *Yugantar* of Bengal. Savarkar was now the acclaimed leader of the revolutionary movement which had spread almost all over Maharashtra. So he was invited to deliver speeches at public meetings, festivals and functions in Maharashtra. A brilliant young man with a black cap, short-collared coat, square jaws, presentable forehead, prominent cheek-bones, leader Savarkar was an energetic and

magnetic figure. The propaganda and popularity of the revolutionary leader rose rapidly and his arrest seemed inevitable. Rumours about his arrest were afloat in Nasik, Poona and Bombay, but they proved to be false.

During his stay in Bombay Savarkar was one day called by the students of Poona to interview a person named Agamya Guru. Savarkar went to Poona for the purpose. But in a few minutes the interview terminated. The Agamya Guru was as abstruse as his name. But more ridiculous was the invention of the C.I.D. that traced Savarkar's inborn spring of inspiration to the recluse. Poor creatures! they knew not that mathematics and mahatmatics never go together!

About this time news came to India that Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma, then resident of London, offered scholarships for Indian students desiring to study in Europe. Savarkar revolved the idea in his mind. The scholarship being insufficient he first approached his father-in-law in the matter. He made sure of some help from him and applied for one of the scholarships with recommendations of Tilak and Shivrampant Paranjpe. Giving a brief sketch of his career Savarkar proceeds in his application: "Independence and Liberty I look upon as the very pulse and breath of nation. From my boyhood, dear sir, upto this moment of my youth, the loss of Independence of my country and the possibility of regaining it form the only theme of which I dreamt by night and on which I mused by day." Tilak's recommendation runs as follows. "When there is such a rush like that, it is no use recommending any one particularly to your notice. But, still, I may state, among the applicants there is one Mr. Savarkar from Bombay, who graduated last year and whom I know to be a spirited young man very enthusiastic in the swadeshi cause so much so that he had to incur the displeasure of the Fergusson College authorities. He has no mind to take up Government service at any time and his moral character is very good." Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma agreed. Signing an agreement before Tilak, Savarkar received a sum of Rs. 400 through him as the first instalment of the Shivaji Scholarship which Pandit Varma awarded to him. Shivaji and Savarkar were thus grouped together by Shyamji.

Savarkar made preparations for the voyage. On the eve of his departure for London he was given a send-off at a big public meeting in Nasik. He bade farewell to his wife and his son named Prabhakar. Amidst an atmosphere filled with various dreams of Savarkar's future greatness his relations, his comrades and devotees gave him in Bombay a hearty send-off on June 9, 1906, and the steamer *Persia*, left Bombay on her great voyage with the prince of Indian Revolutionaries on her deck for the consummation of his great vision, great aim and great deeds.

CHAPTER III

Revolutionary Activities in Europe

I

The year 1906 was a landmark in Indian politics. During this year Savarkar, the leader of the Abhinava Bharat, went to London. That year saw the birth of the Muslim League at Dacca. The formation of Barindranath's revolutionary party at Maniktola, a suburb of Calcutta, and the foundation of the revolutionary institution, the Anushilan Samiti, took place during the same year.

With a band of a few hundred youths at his command in Maharashtra, Savarkar left India. Maharashtra was too small a field for the young lion and the lion went in search of lions. During those days revolutionaries from Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China occasionally took shelter in London. Under the garb of a law student, Savarkar also was going to enter the gates of the Empire capital. His main object was to have a look at the den of the British lion, to learn how to organize a revolution and carry on the struggle for the liberation of Hindusthan by inculcating tenets of revolution into the brilliant brains of the cream of the Indian students, who went abroad either for academic careers or for qualifying themselves for the civil service. The young orator of Maharashtra was now to be in London, the largest debating society under the sun.

On board the ship *Persia* Savarkar happened to come across a youth named Harnam Singh who became since then a devoted follower of Savarkar. Harnam Singh was homesick. He was about to give up his journey to England. But Savarkar persuaded him easily. He pointed out to him how the adventurous and ambitious British, French and Portuguese youths served in foreign lands for the glory and welfare of their Motherland and how his Motherland suffered for want of daring sons. He further said to Harnam Singh : " Dear is one's own mother, but dearer, by far, is and ought to be our

Motherland, the Mother of mothers of our race."[1] And Harnam Singh went to London.

Savarkar reached London in the first week of July 1906, and took his lodgings at the India House founded by Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma. In due course Savarkar was admitted to Gray's Inn, one of the four Inns of Court in London. Pandit Shyamji, who had awarded the Shivaji scholarship to Savarkar, had established a Home Rule Society and the India House during the first quarter of 1905. A sterling patriot and a noted social reformer, Pandit Shyamji was highly respected as an incomparable authority on Sanskrit Works by eminent scholars like Prof. Max Muller and Prof. Monier Williams. Born on October 4, 1857, he came of a poor family by name Bhansali. He studied upto the Matriculation class in the Elphinstone High School, Bombay. During his school days he went on a lecturing tour on behalf of the Arya Samaj as the right-hand man of Swami Dayananda. He married the daughter of Seth Chhabildas Lallubhai and through the influence of Prof. Monier Williams proceeded to London in March 1879, took his B.A. at Cambridge and was called to the bar. There he read his essay on 'The Origin of Writing in India' in the Royal Asiatic Society of London and was elected its member. In 1881 he was sent by the Secretary of State for India to represent India at the Berlin Congress of Orientalists. On his return to India he successfully served three Indian States, Ratlam, Udaipur and Junagad either in the capacity of a Divan, or a Member of the Council. During his term of office at Junagad he went out of his way to oblige one European officer named Maconochie, who, with the aid of Divan, ultimately sacked the Pandit himself. This one-time disciple of Swami Dayananda was greatly influenced by Tilak also. After the arrest of Tilak he permanently left India for London. There he studied Herbert Spencer and was deeply influenced by his philosophy, so much so that he announced at the latter's funeral on December 4, 1903, a donation of £1,000 for establishing a Lectureship in the name of his English *Guru* in the University of Oxford.

Through the columns of his *Indian Sociologist* Pandit Shyamji started agitation for Home Rule for India. Observing

[1] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 35.

Savarkar's whole-hearted devotion to the cause of freedom, burning mission and phenomenal energy, he developed a paternal affection for Savarkar. He went over to the Abhinava Bharat, and was initiated into its fold. In 1907 he entrusted the management of the India House entirely to Savarkar and left for Paris. Few have spent so much, struggled so hard, and donated so abundantly towards the freedom movement of India as Pandit Shyamji, the great patriot, did in those early days of difficulties, dangers and despair of Indian Freedom Movement. He was a lover of Spencer's dictum that 'resistance to aggression is not simply justifiable but imperative'. What was most striking, he had ruthlessly denounced Gandhiji for helping the British against the Boers who fought for their liberation.

It is worth mentioning what the Muslim students thought of this India House. Mr. Ziauddin Ahmed, then in Germany, warned Mr. Abdulla Suhrawardy in these clear words : "You know that we have a definite political policy at Aligarh, i.e. the policy of Sir Syed . . . I understand that Mr. Krishna Varma has founded a society called 'Indian Home Rule Society' and you are also one of its vice-presidents. Do you really believe that the Mohammedans will be profited if Home Rule be granted to India ? . . . There is no doubt that this Home Rule is decidedly against the Aligarh policy. . . . What I call the Aligarh policy is really the policy of all the Mohammedans generally—of the Mohammedans of Upper India particularly."[1] Mr. Asaf Ali wrote to Pandit Shyamji in September 1909 : "I am staying with some Muslim friends who do not like me to associate with nationalists ; and, to save many unpleasant consequences, I do not want to irritate them unnecessarily."[2] Thus the Muslim antagonism to the Freedom Movement of India dates back to its beginning itself.

II

As soon as Savarkar established himself, he started the "Free India Society". It was a recruiting institution of the Abhinava Bharat and worked openly. Savarkar organised Indian students and transformed majority of them into patriots

[1] S. L Karandikar, *Savarkar-Charitra*, pp. 132-33.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 133.

and martyrs. His magnetic personality brought Bhai Parmananda, then a well-known leader of light and learning, into the revolutionary movement. He attracted Lala Hardayal. A staunch Hindu, Hardayal had an instinctive disbelief in, and hatred for, the Muslims. He was a man of strong emotions and great vision, and wielded a mighty pen. Savarkar's another colleague was Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, brother of the late Mrs. Sarojini Naidu. He was a student at the Middle Temple Inn and was expelled during Savarkar's stormy days in London. A great brain and a brilliant journalist, he died mysteriously an exile in the custody of Stalin's Russia during World War II. Sri V. V. S. Aiyer, a lawyer from Rangoon, had been to London for qualifying himself for the bar. He was drawn to the Abhinava Bharat by Savarkar and became the Vice-President of the Abhinava Bharat and the right-hand man of Savarkar. Aiyer was a saintly soul who lived a life of sacrifice and worship. Sri Sardarsinghji Rana hailed from one of the old ruling families of Kathiawar. He had naturalised in France and was a fearless supporter of the struggle for Indian Independence.

Sri Gyanchand Varma was Secretary of the Abhinava Bharat, and was a man of great capacity and calibre. Madame Cama was another great patriotic personality. She was previously secretary to Dadabhai Naoroji while he was a member of the British Parliament. She accepted the revolutionary philosophy of the Abhinava Bharat and was the first Indian to hoist the national tricolour flag of India at the Socialist Conference in Germany in 1907. She died unnoticed in 1937 in Bombay amidst ungrateful surroundings. Senapati Bapat was meant for Engineering, but, destined as he was to engineer bridges and roads for Indian Freedom, he joined the revolutionary camp. A peerless patriot and selfless saintly leader, he has been a great and good name in the revolutionary movement. Madanlal Dhingra was another Engineering student. He was a darting arrow in the handcuffed hands of Mother India. Many others who rose in their later life to eminence like Dr. Rajan, Sri Shukla—who later became Prime Minister of C.P.—Sri Sukhasagar Dutt, brother of Ullaskar Dutt of Andamans fame, Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Khan of

Nabha and others were initiated as members of the London branch of the Abhinava Bharat Society.

What was the condition of Indian students in Britain in pre-Savarkarian days ? Formerly eight out of ten Indian students prided themselves on being more English in their make-up and mind than Englishmen themselves. So far, the dream of Lord Macaulay seemed realized to a large extent. He had expected the emergence of " a class Indian in blood and colour, but English in tastes, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." [1] Almost all educated Indians suffered from Anglomania. Indian students drank merrily, danced lustily and donned richly. They visited all quarters freely, and were very apologetic in their talk about things Indian. After returning to India, these ambitious position-seekers would drum in the ears of their countrymen many faked tales and garbled facts about the goodness and greatness of the British men and minds !

In these days India had no place in the pictures and columns of the British Press. That is why Dadabhai Naoroji, the Grand Old Man of India, had to purchase the shares of the *Daily News* to secure a place for his say in its columns.

With the appearance of Savarkar the sun shone on the dark deeds of British Imperialism in India, and revealed the good side and the noble aspirations of India to Europe. Savarkar was a youth great in courage, great in vision, great in ideas and great in action. The skyhigh towers and the ocean-wide powers of the British could not dazzle, delude, or overawe him. The mist disappeared. The towers and powers looked in their naked perspective. The members of the Free India Society began to think. They held weekly meetings, celebrated anniversaries of Shivaji, Guru Govind Singh and Guru Nanak and also the Dasara Festival. Indian students from all corners of Britain joined the festivals heart and soul. Of course there were some like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru who did not join. They were political sucklings in their swaddling clothes resting at the breast of the West. With Savarkar's powerful group to defend Indian aspirations, officially sponsored meetings in London did not go well. Strong youthful voices began to blow away the sheep clothing of God-fearing Englishmen like Sir Henry Cotton. Moved by the tragic vision of the downfall

[1] K. B. Krishna, *the Problem of Minorities*, p. 138.

of the Indian Empire, Sir Henry Cotton appealed to the Indian youths to desist from their perilous aim of carving out a free Independent India.[1] English people and Press felt something stinging in their hearts. At this stage (Senapati) Bapat wrote a brochure demanding Home Rule for India. As a result of this the Bombay University deprived him of the Sir Mangaldas Nathubhai Scholarship. Upon this Savarkar pungently commented whether that scholarship was meant for a student who prayed for the perpetual slavery of Hindusthan ![2]

In Britain May First was observed as a thanksgiving day in honour of the British victory over the Indian revolutionaries of 1857. In addition, now a drama was staged in London in 1907 in which Rani Laxmi and Nanasahib were depicted as ruffians and murderers. To counteract the vilifying propaganda carried through the English play Savarkar decided to celebrate the Diamond Jubilee of the heroes of 1857. On the 10th of May 1907, Indians in Britain held meetings, observed fasts, took vows, and paid their grateful homage to those great martyrs of 1857 and displayed on their chests memorial badges with pride. In trains and in streets scuffles ensued between impudent Britishers and the patriotic Indian youths who wore badges to commemorate the great memory of their heroes. Mr. Harnam Singh and Mr. R. M. Khan, who wore such badges, quitted their college protesting against the Principal's words of insult about the heroes of 1857. Patriotic feelings clashed. These fearless heroic actions stirred the hornets' nest of the British Press. The much-admired and adored Pandit Shyamji became notorious as a patriot Pandit; for the patriotism of a Hindu was a narrower phase than Humanism in the eyes of the Imperialist Britishers ! Pandit Shyamji attained a marvellous notoriety in the eyes of the British journals and gentlemen who scathingly condemned him for his fearless propaganda for Home Rule ! Suspicion and alarm tightened their grip on the British mind. A little while ago Englishmen had described the blessings of Brahmins on Surendranath Banerjee as the coronation of the Emperor Surendranath ! This shock also quickened the palpitation of the Empire capital for a good many hours.

[1] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 17.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 24.

The debates and discussions held in the Free India Society on the political philosophy were highly inspiring and of a very high order. They echoed also throughout India in Savarkar's letters from London which were read with great interest. The members of the Abhinava Bharat were all intellectual giants. Savarkar gave them life and light. He told them that whosoever wanted to live a deathless life should die for the freedom of his country. He impressed upon their minds that peaceful evolution had a meaning and a sense, but peaceful revolution had neither. He emphasized: "In the end passive resistance falls because it has no backing of the army and because it presupposes all men to be selfless and believes that all men will not co-operate with the aggressor." "Besides, it blindly presumes," he went on, "that the aggressor has a high sense of morality and will not resort to arms or enact new orders and ordinances." He illustrated how passive resistance staged by the farm-workers of Narbonne in Southern France was suppressed by military forces in 1907!

In young Savarkar's view the sea of humanity was progressing. "The sooner the deliverance of humanity," he proclaimed, "the surer the dawnfall of the British Imperialism!" According to him France was the God-given political laboratory for making experiments with all kinds of Governments, all sorts of revolutions, and all categories of societies. "The French people," he said, "are by nature gifted with imagination and initiative and wonderful creative ability."[1]

Such was the power of his thoughts and personality! Savarkar was both magnetic and mesmeric. The India House was completely under his spell. Sri M. P. T. Acharya, Savarkar's one-time colleague, describes the young leader of the Abhinava Bharat vividly. He says: "His personal charm was such that a mere shakehand could convert men as V. V. S. Aiyer and Hardayal—not only convert but even bring out the best out of them. Sincere men always became attached to him whether they agreed with or differed from him. Not only men in ordinary walks of life but even those, aspiring to high offices, recognised the purity of purpose in him, although they were poles apart from him, and deadly opponents as regards his political objectives. They even opened

[1] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 62.

their purse for his propaganda. That means Savarkar had a rare tact in dealing with men of every variety. Savarkar's austerity was itself a discipline to others, which easy-going people hated and shunned. England was a country for amusement and most people wanted to make the most out of it." [1] Relating the story of his conversion Senapati Bapat observes: "Before I met Savarkar, I had planned a revolutionary pamphleteer's and lecturer's life for myself. A few months after I met him, I cancelled my plan and took up the idea of going to Paris for learning bomb-making." Bapat further observes: "One of the chief reasons was the impression that Savarkar made on me by his brilliant writing and speaking. 'Here is a born revolutionary writer and speaker;' I said to myself, 'I may well leave writing and speaking to him and turn to some other work in the revolutionary field'." [2] Mr. Asaf Ali described nicely the serious atmosphere of the India House of Savarkar's days and wrote in his memoirs of Savarkar: "I wonder how so young a person—for he could not have been much beyond two or three and twenty in 1909—commanded the will of almost everyone who came into contact with him." Asaf Ali added that Savarkar was the spirit of Shivaji.[3]

III

Another great task to which Savarkar devoted his energy was foreign propaganda. He was the first and foremost Indian leader who perceived and foresaw the impact of vital forces in international politics. Years after, Subhas Bose took up the thread where it had been left by this precursor and moved international forces for the cause of Indian freedom. To that end Savarkar wrote vigorous political articles on Indian affairs in the *Gaelic America* of New York, got them translated into German, French, Italian, Russian and Portuguese languages and had them published in the respective countries. In this his aim was two-fold. First, he wanted to acquaint the civilised world with Indian affairs and enlist their moral sympathy for the cause of Indian freedom;

[1] M. P. T. Acharya, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.
[2] Senapati Bapat, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.
[3] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 124.

and secondly, he strove to make India a living issue in international politics. It was with this aim in view that Savarkar had deputed Madame Cama and Sardar Singh Rana to represent India at the International Socialist Congress which was held in August 1907 at Stuttgart in Germany. In spite of the opposition from the British Socialist representative, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Madame Cama, with the support of Mr. Hyndman of England and M. Jean Jaures of France, stood before the Conference to move the resolution on India and unfurled the flag of Independence of India which was a creation of Savarkar and his colleagues. Inspired by the call of Independence Madame Cama addressed the Conference fervently and said: "This flag is of Indian Independence. Behold it is born! It is already sanctified by the blood of martyred Indian youths! I call upon you, gentlemen, to rise and salute this flag of Indian Independence. In the name of this flag I appeal to lovers of freedom all over the world to co-operate with this flag in freeing one-fifth of the human race!"[1] The delegates rose up and saluted the flag of Indian Independence. They were tremendously impressed by her speech and described Madame Cama as an Indian Princess! How far these Herculian efforts of Savarkar and the great endeavours of his comrades were successful can be seen when no less a personality than the Kaiser himself clearly stated in his famous reply to President Wilson that absolute political Independence of India was one of the indispensable conditions for world peace!

The Indian revolutionaries of Abhinava Bharat were also in touch with the revolutionary forces of Russia, Ireland, Egypt and China. Savarkar's aim was to organize a united anti-British Front with a view to rising in revolt simultaneously against the British Empire. One of the schemes to be carried out by the United Front was 'the blocking of the Suez Canal in the event of an armed rising in India! Prominent Egyptian leaders then residing in Paris had promised active support for carrying out the scheme'![2] Thus every minute, every word, every thought and every act of Savarkar breathed some sort of plan or idea for the liberation of his Motherland

[1] Maharashtra Prakashan Sanstha, *Savarkar-Charitra*, p. 67.
[2] Niranjan Pal, *Thirty Years Ago, The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

and the downfall of the British Empire. Such intense patriotism coupled with his young age, his brilliant brains, his long-range plans and the British statesmen's correct reading of men and times were destined to invite on Savarkar unusually long incarceration as is the fate of every pioneer liberator of a slave country!

The liberation of the Motherland was to be achieved by a preparation for war which included (1) the teaching of Swadeshi, Boycott and national training; (2) purchase and storing of weapons in neighbouring states; (3) opening of small factories; (4) purchasing weapons in foreign countries and smuggling them into India; (5) adopting guerilla tactics whenever possible, and (6) waiting for a favourable opportunity to rise in revolt. That opportunity was drawing near. There were abundant indications that a war was imminent in Europe; and the revolutionaries of the Abhinava Bharat expected to take advantage of the world situation and fight out the Britishers to win back the independence of their Motherland. In the first issue of the *Talwar*, the chief organ of Abhinava Bharat, Savarkar had fully discussed and weighed the possibilities of the outbreak of a war in Europe within four or five years while explaining the complicated affairs arising out of the Kiel Canal in 1908. And that golden opportunity was not to be missed.

With that end in view Savarkar and his Abhinava Bharat Society were busy writing, printing, packing and posting explosives and inflaming literature. Savarkar often appeared at the weekly meetings of Abhinava Bharat with the colour of picric acid on his hands. Pistols were smuggled into India through books and books through false bottoms. The atmosphere was filled with heroic pride. The Abhinava Bharat deputed Senapati Bapat and Hemchandra Das to study the art of manufacturing bombs. They learnt it from a Russian revolutionary in Paris and brought a Bomb Manual from him. And Bapat, Hotilal Varma and Hemchandra Das left London for India with cyclostyled copies of the Bomb Manual.

In India persecution and prosecution, repression and suppression reared their ugly heads. Brave and brilliant editors wrote with fiery pens. Vivekananda's brother,

Bhupendranath Dutt, editor of the *Yugantar*, Babu Arvind Ghosh, editor of the *Bande Mataram*, Sri Prithvigir Harigir, editor of the *Harikishor*, Yeotmal, and Sri Bhaskar Vishnu Phadke of the *Vihari*, Bombay, were arrested and sentenced to one or two years' rigorous imprisonment. In the Punjab discontent and political excitement fanned by a set of regulations proposed for the new canal colonies reached a dangerous point. To avert the trouble, Punjab's great leader, Lala Lajpat Rai and the violent agitator Sardar Ajit Singh, were deported.

The year 1907 was in a turmoil and tempo. The left wing was forging ahead with the rise of Tilak. His titanic intellect, formidable personality and his great gifts of leadership wielded an unparalleled influence. Tilak was the first great mass leader of modern India who enjoyed a universal popularity. He denounced the mendicancy of the Congress method. His doctrine spread from province to province. All forces of action rose under his banner and ultimately the Surat Congress broke over the Ironsides of Tilakites and the young revolutionaries of Abhinava Bharat who had gathered at Surat and held a secret meeting of some two hundred strong at the instance of Babarao *alias* Ganeshpant Savarkar.

IV

The year 1908 saw many other stirring events in India. A new spirit was rising in India. The country was at the dawn of a new epoch. It was a time of violent repression, profound discontent and fierce antagonism. New hopes, new desires, new measures and new thoughts were in the air. Love of freedom, hatred of slavery and hope for a great future captivated the young and the old alike. Poets and patriots blossomed forth. Youths vied with one another in making the purest and greatest sacrifices on the altar of freedom. Even revellers shed their revelry and revolted. India drifted from the policy of petition to the politics of pressure under Tilak and from the politics of pressure to the potency of powder under Savarkar. So tense were the feelings and so grim was the fight that even the good-hearted and god-fearing grand old man of India, Dadabhai Naoroji, was driven to despair and to the thought of revolt. The fiery doctrines of boycott of foreign

goods, the propagation of Swadeshi and the hatred of foreign rule were spreading all over India. As a result of their fiery speeches Sri Subramanya Bharati, and Chidambaram Pillay, an initiated member of the Abhinava Bharat, were jailed. From London Savarkar was eagerly watching these events in Madras province.

Another important event of note was that Senapati Bapat, Hotilal Varma and Hemchandra Das had by now reached India and circulated the cyclostyled copies of the Bomb Manual through important centres of the revolutionaries. The new technique made bombs really effective. And then followed the most outstanding and memorable event of the year that fanned the sacrificial flames of revolution, when Khudiram Bose threw a bomb in Muzaffarpur on April 30. Two unfortunate English ladies were killed in the act instead of the *District Magistrate, Mr. Kingsford, for whom the bomb was intended. It shook violently the whole of Hindusthan and resulted in the incarceration and transportation of brilliant editors, great leaders and daring youths of Bengal and Maharashtra. Khudiram's comrade, Prafulla Chakravarti, killed himself with his revolver; his other comrades,* Kanailal Dutt and Satyendra Bose shot down the approver Narendra Goswami in the hospital of the Alipore jail and died on the gallows, and the famous Maniktola trial ended in the transportation of a batch of valiant fighters like Babu Arvind's brother Barindranath Ghose, Ullaskar Dutt, Hemchandra Das, Indu Bhushan Roy, Upendranath Banerjee and many others to the Andamans. To cope with the growing furious tide of this revolution Lord Minto, the Viceroy of India, asked Lord Morley, the Secretary of State for India for more repressive measures. Morley was opposed to a policy of repression. But vain, vacillating, touchy, subtle and a bookish liberal that he was, he ultimately yielded. And Lord Minto promulgated new regulations, Criminal Law Amendment Acts and blacked out all the "Four Freedoms". In Maharashtra, Shivrampant Paranjpe was sentenced to 19 months' rigorous imprisonment for his inflammatory article on the Muzaffarpur Bomb affair. For a similar reason Tilak, the father of Indian unrest, was deported to Mandalay on July 23. From his talk with Gokhale, Morley had scented that Tilak was in close touch with Savarkar and

Bapat and the British Government had asked the Indian Government to arrange for his incarceration. For just before the decision of the Tilak case some of the members of the Abhinava Bharat had intercepted in Bombay one night a message from the British Government regarding the Tilak affair which contained the information. Sri R. N. Mandlik, editor of the *Vihari*, Sri Dhondopant Phadke of the *Arunoday*, Thana, Sri Balwantrao Limaye of the *Swaraj*, Sholapur, Sri Achyut Balvant Kolhatkar of the *Sandesh*, Nagpur, Sri N. V. Bhave of the *Harikishor*, Yeotmal, and the editor of the *Pratod*, Satara, were also put in prison. The approver in the Alipore case had disclosed Senapati Bapat's connection with the Bengali revolutionaries. Upon this Senapati Bapat eluded the police, escaped and went into voluntary exile for years. Bengal and Maharashtra were closely linked! Sir Valentine Chirol who was then travelling in India wrote to the *London Times*: "The Deccan is honeycombed with secret societies. . . . Even in Bengal, the Bengalees did the shouting; it was Poona that provided the brains that directed the Bengali extremists."[1]

And the fountainhead of the revolutionary movement in India was Savarkar, the acknowledged leader of the India House.

The news of Tilak's arrest came as a thunderbolt to Indians in London. The great statesman Sri Gokhale was then in London on his fourth political visit, this time on account of the Morley-Minto Reforms proposals then in the offing. Fearfully or prayerfully Gokhale declined to preside over a meeting held in London to protest against the deportation of Tilak and the repressive measures of the Indian Government, nor did he attend the meeting. What a contrast! Morley rightly wrote to Minto that Gokhale, as a party manager, was a baby and while any politician aspiring to be a leader should never whine, Gokhale whined like a second-rate leader![2] In the same letter Morley appreciated Tilak's spirit. Whereupon Minto expressed his view that Tilak was an arch-leader of sedition![3] Humiliated at the timid and spineless attitude of Gokhale and hurt by his blank refusal, some of the hotheads

[1] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 112.
[2] K. B. Krishna, *The Problem of Minorities*, p. 141.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 142.

in the revolutionary camp thought of putting an end to his life. But Savarkar bridled them and bitterly condemned the very sinful thought. He voiced a timely warning that such a mad act and attack on one of their compatriots for his own way of thinking would imperil the power and prestige of the revolutionary movement.[1] The proposed meeting was then held in the Caxton Hall under the chairmanship of Mr. Parekh, and by a special resolution condemned Gokhale's attitude vehemently.

Immediately after Gokhale's arrival Savarkar with his lieutenants, Dr. Rajan and Sri V. V. S. Aiyer, had seen Gokhale and Sri Ramesh Chandra Dutt. There was a discussion on the War of 1857 between them. Gokhale had taught history and Dutt was a historian. In the course of his talk with them Savarkar stressed the point of writing and interpreting the history of 1857 from the national point of view. The historian agreed to this, but the statesman disagreed and the discussion ended.

V

The last quarter of 1908 was the busiest period for the Free India Society. Leaders of note and figures of fame from India had reached London. Lala Lajpat Rai, Gokulchand Narang, Babu Bepin Chandra Pal, Gokhale, Dutt, G. B. Khaparde and R. V. Karandikar—the last pair for the Tilak case appeal—were then in London. October 16 was observed as Anti-Partition day, and under the chairmanship of Lala Lajpat Rai, Khaparde, Karandikar and B. C. Pal spoke on the occasion. On the same day in the same hall a meeting was held to extend sympathies to the Indians in South Africa. Sir Mancherjee Bhownagari was in the chair and Lajpat Rai, Savarkar, Pal, Khaparde and others were the speakers. Babu Bepin Pal captivated his audience with his powerful oratory. His lectures delivered later on in the Caxton Hall on the 20th and 21st December were attended by many Englishmen.

On December 20, a National Conference was held. Dadasahib Khaparde presided. Madame Cama spoke on the 'Boycott' resolution which was seconded by Sri Gyanchand

[1] Savarkar, *Mazi Janmathep*, p. 163.

Varma. At the same meeting Sri V. V. S. Aiyer spoke on the resolution on Turkastan congratulating her on becoming a Republic and was seconded by Sir Aga Khan, afterwards H.H. the Aga Khan. The main resolution demanding 'Swaraj' was moved by Dr. Kumarswami and Savarkar seconded it. Addressing the Conference Savarkar said that the true meaning of Swaraj was absolute political independence. He also told his audience: "Knowing this full well, you are voting for this resolution. Before passing this resolution just bring before your mind's eye the dreadful prison walls, and the dreary dingy cells." The resolution was passed unanimously. "The Morley-Minto Reforms," declared the conference by another resolution, "are deceptive, disappointing and insulting inasmuch as they will foment communal tension in India." And so indeed they proved to be a great slur on the growth of constitutionalism in India. Minto's craze to outshine the efficient Curzon, his policy of counterpoise, his fear of a Muslim revolt as threatened by Sir Syed Ahmed, the spineless nature and want of grit in Gokhale and Morley's proverbial unfamiliarity with Indian affairs culminated in a communal division of India holding a nascent threat to Indian unity! But the reforms were beyond doubt a surrender to the revolutionary agitation in India and outside. "I detect," wrote Sir Valentine Chirol from Bombay on January 8, 1909, to the *London Times*, "a very general tendency to ascribe these lavish gifts to the vigorous actions of the extremists. If it had not been for the bombs, we should not have had these boons, was a remark which roughly summed up the popular opinion in this aspect of the subject." [1]

Immediately after the conference in the decorated Caxton Hall, the birth-day anniversary of Guru Govindsingh was celebrated on the 29th of December 1908, when Babu Bepin Chandra Pal presided. The function began with the song 'Amar Desh', and Savarkar's famous song 'Priyakar Hindusthan'. Sri Gokulchand Narang read at the meeting his essay on the Guru. Lala Lajpat Rai with his unbending personality, sturdy patriotism, hallowed by his constructive work and with his profound erudition poured forth his burning words. He was a very effective speaker and held a high

[1] *London Times*, dated 25-1-1909.

place among the orators of India. Babu Bepin Chandra Pal, a sterling patriot, an orator of high rank, a well-read scholar, a thinker and a great editor also spoke on the occasion. It was a meeting of scholars, speakers and orators! After these great speeches, Savarkar was pressed by the audience to speak, and he rose amid a deafening applause. Gifted with a moving tongue, spotless sincerity and burning heart, he thrilled his audience. A man of faith and conviction is always irresistible and all-conquering. So was Savarkar with the personality of a hero! In the lighted, moving and inspired atmosphere created by Savarkar even the magic speech of India's greatest orator, Surendranath Banerjee, the heartforce and fire of Bepin Babu, the freshness and fervour of Lajpat Rai and the polished diction of Syed Reza paled into insignificance! The only giant Savarkar had not crossed his swords with, was Pherozeshah Mehta, but even with his great power of rhetoric Mehta was no Surendranath. Describing Savarkar as the best orator he ever heard in India or England, Mr. Asaf Ali wrote afterwards: "Nor is it an exaggeration to say Savarkar is one of the few really effective speakers I have known and heard, and there is hardly an orator of the first rank either here or in England whom I have not had the privilege of hearing—excepting Mr. Eardly Norton, of whom I have heard so much that I should be almost reluctant to avail myself of the opportunity of hearing him speak lest I should be disappointed."[1]

The fervid patriotism, love of unity and a will to sacrifice in the Indian youths became an eyesore to the Britishers. One man's meat is another man's poison! The newspapers cried hoarse against them. "Crush the extremists and rally round the Moderates" was their theme. British Press, pensioners and patriots also grew alarmed at the daring and disloyal attitude of the Indian youths. In the words of the *Standard*, "it is beyond question that not a few of the highly intelligent Indians in our Universities and reading for the Bar, are striving their utmost by such means, particularly to accustom the minds of young rising generation to the idea of an armed revolt!"[2]

[1] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 126.
[2] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 108.

The *London Times* endorsed this view and asked the Government to take great care to control education and to be very careful as to the kind of people whom it appointed to teach the youth of India.[1] A meeting was also held under the presidency of Lord Lamington, an ex-Governor of Bombay, to consider and adopt means to socialize these warlike elements. But the meeting was hotly disturbed, only B. C. Pal getting a smooth hearing. An incident added fuel to the fire. Sri Vasudeo Bhattacharya, ex-editor of *Sandhya* and one-time editor of *Yugantar* at about the same time struck Sir William Lee-Warner a blow on the face for having called Sri Kunjavihari Bhattacharya "a dirty nigger". Sir Lee-Warner was, while in India, a terror to the Indian Princes; and the attack on such a person was not an ordinary matter. Sri Vasudeo Bhattacharya was prosecuted and fined Rs. 20. But the attack made India House the talk of the whole city. If anyone gave his address as India House, the listener would at once look up at the man and say, "Then you belong to the revolutionary party!" Artists and careerists in London took a dread and said, "Who will go to India these days? There bombs may explode anywhere and at any moment!"

The British Press and the people thus turned their attention to the wonderful India House at Highgate and its leader. But when representatives of newspapers visited it, they were surprised to see that Savarkar whom they criticised and opposed was merely a beardless and uptodate youth of twenty-five. The *Standard* described Savarkar as an Indian, with youth and intelligence stamped upon him. Mr. Cambel Green wrote in the *Sunday Chronicle* that Savarkar was not only the spokesman of the students but also of Shyamji Krishna Varma and said, "He has a clear olive complexion, clear deep penetrating eyes, and a width of jaw such as I have seen in few men. His English is excellent." He added, "The fact is Mr. V. D. Savarkar believes in India for the Indians and in the complete emancipation of India from the British Rule. He says India has nothing for what to thank the English, unless it be the denationalization, as he calls it, of the Hindus."[2]

[1] Annie Besant, *Wake Up India*, p. 238.
[2] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 119.

The Indian students talked in the Indian languages and Scotland Yard became non-plussed. So to their succour was deputed one Mr. Kirtikar, who had worked in the Bombay High Court in the capacity of a translator, to watch the activities of the Abhinava Bharat. This plain-clothed detective resided at the India House under the guise of a student of Dental Surgery and every day he sent a secret report to the C.I.D. Office. Suspicion soon fell on him. Dr. Rajan and Sri Aiyer kept a watch over his activities. One night when he was out, they broke into his room and found an incomplete report awaiting dispatch to the C.I.D. On Kirtikar's return Savarkar and Aiyer interrogated him and unmasked his veil. Finding that his treachery was unearthed, he trembled from head to foot at the sight of Aiyer's revolver and confessed the facts. The dental surgeon felt the loss of his teeth. However, instead of ejecting him Savarkar shrewdly allowed him to continue in India House to make him less troublesome. He, however, decided that Kirtikar's reports should go to the C.I.D. only after his perusal!

Savarkar's resourceful brain knew all the types and twists of the revolutionary business. He won the sympathies of the Irishmen serving in Scotland Yard who actually helped the Indian revolutionaries in smuggling political literature. Besides, the Abhinava Bharat had its secret agents in Scotland Yard. Niranjan Pal, a comrade of Savarkar and son of the Bengal leader, Bepin Chandra Pal, writes: "In those days we, too, had our secret agents in Scotland Yard. Some of them were sent to London ostensibly as students but really to act as spies. Two of such men ingratiated themselves with Savarkar and secured lodgings in the India House. But such was Savarkar's magnetic personality that soon they came under his spell and of their own accord, confessed everything to him."[1] Savarkar's sharp and penetrating eyes and the peculiar way in which he cross-examined any visitor to the India House exposed many an expert C.I.D. and hoodwinked the watchdogs many a time.

But the most remarkable and rare gift of Savarkar was his balanced mind and the power of discrimination. He was a revolutionary realist and never dreamt of giving and taking

[1] Niranjan Pal, The *Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

life emotionally or by wasting human energy and life blindly. That outstanding characteristic of Savarkar distinguished him from the terrorist or a solitary reckless revolutionary. His aim was to rise in an organised revolt at the opportune time and liberate his country from the foreign yoke. The gift of his marvellous presence of mind and the realist in revolutionary Savarkar were seen when he checked Senapati Bapat who offered to bomb the House of Commons. Senapati Bapat states : "I proposed once to attempt the life of the Secretary of State for India, at another time, I offered to drop a bomb in the Parliament House. On both occasions Savarkar refused his consent and on the second occasion took great pains to persuade me to return to India without delay for such work as was waiting for me here. I treasured his advice and followed it soon enough."[1] Savarkar checked the Senapati lest their secret mastery of science would be exposed before it reached India. Moreover, Savarkar prevented the revolutionary movement from falling into an abyss from a horrible precipice !

VI

The hot discussions in the India House and the fiery speeches of Savarkar were too hot for some of the Indian leaders who visited England in those days. Gandhiji of South African fame, who was proud of his being a loyal citizen of the British Empire, was one of them. Accompanied by the South African delegates, Gandhiji discussed political philosophy with Savarkar. Arguments, reason and history were against Gandhiji, and his lieutenants supported Savarkar's views. This left a sting of bitterness and Gandhiji vehemently attacked the London revolutionaries and indirectly Savarkar in a violently non-violent booklet entitled *Maro Kato Panth* ! The ideological fight between Gandhiji and Savarkar thus started during the first decade of the twentieth century, and continued markedly pronounced, though Savarkar was behind the bars undergoing trials and stresses of life away from the political scene. Their viewpoints, nay, their very outlook on life, were poles asunder ! It was a fight between the conscious Gautam and the

[1] Senapati Bapat, The *Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

spirited Shivaji. Gandhiji arrogated the religion of God to himself and imputed irreligion of the devil to the revolutionaries and to those leaders who opposed him. Savarkar represented the revolting force of a subject people. That force was the outcome of historic and human laws. This he had made amply clear in the opening issue of the *Talwar*, the chief organ of revolutionaries published from Paris in 1909. The passage quoted below will conspicuously cast a flood of light on Savarkar's mental make-up and his human stand and prove his rational outlook. It states : "We feel no special love for secret organisations or surprise and secret warfare. We hold that whenever the open preaching and practising of truth is banned by enthroned violence, then alone secret societies and secret warfare are justified as the inevitable and indispensable means to combat violence by force." Savarkar further says : "Whenever the natural process of national and political evolution is violently suppressed by the forces of wrong, then revolution must step in as a natural reaction and therefore ought to be welcomed as the only effective instrument to re-enthrone Truth and Right." He then brilliantly sums up : "You rule by bayonets and under these circumstances it is a mockery to talk of constitutional agitation when no constitution exists at all. But it would be worse than a mockery, even a crime, to talk of revolution when there is a constitution that allows the fullest and freest development of a nation. Only because you deny us a gun, we pick up a pistol. Only because you deny us light, we gather in darkness to compass means to knock out the fetters that hold our Mother down." [1]

This great, grand and concise doctrine of the revolutionary philosophy of Savarkar would shine out amongst the doctrines of world-famous revolutionary philosophers. President Thomas Masaryk, one of the eminent thinkers and men of action of the modern world, supports this stand when he says : "Revolution is a moral act when it is the only means left for the defence of liberty and justice." [2] And Masaryk was a leader who had worked out and experienced what a revolution was like! Savarkar philosophized his doctrines when he was only six and twenty. If this is not rational

[1] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 72.
[2] Emil Ludwig, *Defenders of Democracy*, p. 109.

thinking, if this is not revolutionary realism and historical truth, what else is it? A Shivaji is born with a love for justice, loyalty to truth, and obedience to God. He is a foe to tyranny and terror to aggression, for he believes with Franklin in the eternal truth that rebellion against tyrants is obedience to God.

Despite these differences Gandhiji presided over the Dasara *Sammelan* in London in 1909 which Savarkar was to address. Gandhiji said he was very proud to have the honour of sitting by the side of Savarkar. He expressed the hope that India would reap the fruits of Savarkar's sacrifice and patriotism. Mr. Asaf Ali tells us that while formally introducing Savarkar that evening to the audience Gandhiji said, "But Mr. Savarkar, the speaker of the evening, is to follow me and I should not like to stand between you and him," and Asaf Ali has described Savarkar's speech on the day as one of the finest speeches he ever listened to![1] In this speech Savarkar impressed upon his audience that without Sri Ramachandra life in India would be nothing. He asked them to remember that Rama established Ram Raj after slaying Ravan, the symbol of tyranny, aggression and injustice, and added that Hindus were the heart of Hindusthan.

The most singular and consistent note that prevails from that time till this day in Savarkar is that he was proud of his race and heritage. An incident of that period also underlines this fact. One day an English lady, residing in a hotel, asked Savarkar if he went to church on Sundays. He said, "No!" The lady paused for a moment and asked him whether he and his friends were Hindus. Savarkar proudly replied that he was a Hindu. One of his colleagues protested that Savarkar's assertion was too direct and would offend the English lady's ear. Thereupon Savarkar retorted: "Then change your father's name if you are cowardly ashamed of it. But you may as well tell the lady that her being English offends my ear too."[2] Savarkar, however, never hated any Englishman because he was an Englishman.

In the meanwhile Minto was striving to crush the forces of seditious agitation in India with his new measures.

[1] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 135.
[2] Savarkar, *Londonchi Batmi Patre*, p. 142.

Repression was raging all round. But the revolutionary movement was still spreading and its morning shadow appeared to the Indian Government longer than what it was. Soon one branch of Abhinava Bharat was unearthed at Gwalior, another at Satara and a few small factories of bombs and secret stores were unearthed in Maharashtra after the arrest of Savarkar's elder brother Babarao. Babarao himself was sentenced to transportation for life on June 8, 1909, on a charge of having waged a war against the King-Emperor by publishing a booklet of inspiring poems! One of these poems asked the people, "Pray tell, whoever got political freedom without a war?" In the absence of his leader brother, Babarao led in Maharashtra the then 'Quit India' movement backed by bombs and pistols. So hearing the shocking news of the confirmation of Babarao's transportation for life by the Bombay High Court in November 1909, Savarkar wrote from London a letter in poetical lines to his sister-in-law, Babarao's wife, consoling her in her great sorrow at the severe blow. The letter written in verse has since then been a charm for Maharashtrian womanhood. Savarkar wrote—

> "... Even so this our Motherland, our Mother, craving for the assistance of the Lord that she too be rescued from the crocodile clutches of Bondage, enters our Garden, plucks a fresh flower from the bough and offers it at His feet in worship. . . ."
>
> "Behold, O Sister, on one side stands watching the Past—souls of sages, saints and heroes of our race gone before and on the other the Future—generations yet unborn." [1]
>
> "Deathless is the family that falls to a man,
> For the emancipation of its Motherland,
> Filling the skies with the fragrance of their sacrifice,
> Made in the welfare of man's rise." *

Mark the great simile, noble interpretation of life! The feelings are real, experienced and not adopted. He is truly a Great Man whose heart soars high, whose courage remains supreme and who can composedly dissolve himself into the Universal self or feels oneness with Him even when his 'self' is surrounded by flames!

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans.* * Translation.

CHAPTER IV

The Storm Breaks

I

The Abhinava Bharat was pondering over the sentences passed upon the Maniktola revolutionaries. Babarao Savarkar's heroic sacrifice blazed vigorously under the sacrificial firmament. The boiling point of British reaction was reached. The zero hour had struck. And Sir Curzon Wyllie, the brain and eye of Indian affairs at the India House, fell a victim to the bullets of Madanlal Dhingra on the first night of July 1909. Along with him also fell Dr. Cawas Lalcaca, an Anglecised Parsee zealot, who tried to save the life of Sir Curzon Wyllie. The fateful incident took place in the Hall of the Imperial Institute, London, at the conclusion of a meeting held to celebrate the annual function of the National Indian Association.

Madanlal Dhingra was a manly spirit, a man who looked into his open grave ! Smartly dressed he looked like a dandy. He was a devoted follower of Savarkar and was proud of his nation. One day someone taunted him that the Japanese were the bravest people in Asia. Dhingra retorted that his Hindu Nation was nothing less in comparison. In the course of the talk, it was decided to test the mettle of Madanlal himself. A pin was pierced through his palm. Blood flowed out profusely, but Dhingra remained unperturbed.

A few days before the Wyllie incident Dhingra had asked his leader whether the time for martyrdom had really come. Out came the epigrammatic reply from Savarkar : "If a martyr is determined and ready that fact by itself generally implies that the time for martyrdom must have come." Dhingra then joined a jolly club where high-placed Englishmen attended. He crept into their confidence. There he learnt to shoot and gained closer knowledge of men like Lord Morley, Lord Curzon and Sir Curzon Wyllie. The living symbol of racial arrogance, the Bengal culprit and the enlightened despot, Lord Curzon was Dhingra's immediate target. A few

days before at a meeting he had pursued this target with the eyes of a crocodile. But the doors of the Hall were closed in his face and restless Dhingra returned and said to Savarkar, "The tiger has escaped!" Determined to avenge the misdeeds the British Government perpetrated in India, he then fell on an equally responsible man, Sir William Curzon Wyllie, with the fierceness of a lion and achieved his end! He was arrested forthwith. Two pistols, a knife and a dagger were found on his person. After the deed, the doctors who examined the victims were astounded to see Dhingra's pulse beating normal, for he was no common killer. Great was the strength and noblest was the soul of Madanlal. Dhingra was then put into the Brixton Jail. And proceedings against Dhingra commenced.

The incident shook London to its marrow! Some unusual crowbar turned London upside down, as it were! India was the subject in every British cottage, in every paper, in trains, in trams, at public squares and in markets, palaces and the British Parliament. The atmosphere became tense. Dhingra's father wired to Lord Morley that he was ashamed to own Madanlal as his son. Even Dhingra's brother in London publicly disowned him. Under the fiery eyes of the Britishers loyal Indians also trembled. Their holy tears overflowed. They assembled on the 5th of July in the famous Caxton Hall to condemn Dhingra. At the meeting Sir Mancherjee Bhownagari, Sir Aga Khan, Sir Surendranath Banerjee, Sri B. C. Pal and Sri Khaparde were loud in their denunciation. The meeting was attended by Maharajkumar of Coochbihar, Sir Dinshaw Petit, Fazalbhoy Karimbhoy, etc. Just then Theodore Morrison, a member of the India Council, brought Madanlal's brother on to the platform. Madanlal's brother spoke sentences which were not his own. Sir Aga Khan, the chairman, then declared, "The meeting unanimously condemns Madanlal Dhingra." But a defying voice from the thickly crowded Hall roared, "No, not unanimously." The chairman angrily uttered: "Who says no?" Out came the reply, "I say no." The chairman pursued, "Your name please." Upon this some lost their patience and shouted, "Pull him down, drive him out!" In a moment Sir Mancherjee Bhownagari jumped from the platform and ran in the direction of the

voice. The challenging voice shot back : " It is me. My name is Savarkar." At this the audience trembled in their joints. They feared that revolutionaries would now bomb the meeting. Women shrieked, non-partisans took to their heels and partisans came from words to blows. The chicken-hearted shook beneath benches and chairs ! In the heat of the passion a Eurasian swooped down upon Savarkar and struck him a blow on the forehead. Savarkar's face was besmeared with blood. His clothes were dripping, his spectacles broken to pieces. " With all this I say, I am against the resolution," he said standing as firm as a rock to maintain his opinion to the last drop of his blood. As he was saying this, Sri Tirumalacharya, who was standing by Savarkar, thrashed the head of the aggressor, one Mr. Palmer, and down went Palmer reeling. Sri Aiyer was about to shoot Palmer, but Savarkar winked at him and restrained him.

In the meanwhile Sir Surendranath had left the hall protesting against the cowardly attack on Savarkar. Sir Aga Khan also did not like the rashness of Sir Mancherjee. At last at the instance of Sir Mancherjee the police interfered, but, seeing that the truth was on Savarkar's side, they let him go. Savarkar also let the Eurasian go ! And the meeting ended.

Tossing from side to side in his bed with a fold of wet cloth on his forehead, Savarkar at his residence dictated a letter the very night for the *London Times.* With its publication he silenced all the hostile criticism against him. His arguments were irrefutable when he stated that, as the case of Dhingra was *sub judice*, the meeting had no right to usurp the powers of the court and condemn Madanlal in advance. Moreover, he had a right to record his vote ! Thus did the historic meeting test the stuff of the leader of revolution and his knowledge of law ! Here one thing may be made clear. Had the meeting at the Caxton Hall sympathised with Lady Curzon Wyllie in her bereavement and done nothing else, Savarkar would have also sympathised with the poor lady. Savarkar was a poet and philosopher full of human attributes. Niranjan Pal, who was present at the meeting, dwells upon this great trait in Savarkar and observes : " The assassination of Sir Curzon Wyllie reminds me of another great trait in Savarkar's character, his humanity. An Indian student laughingly

described how Lady Curzon Wyllie ran down the staircase and threw herself on the body of her husband. All this was too much for Savarkar. 'A wife sobs her heart out for her husband and you laugh at it! I do not trust you—I cannot!' Savarkar had replied in burning indignation. It was a prophetic statement for, the very man secured the King's pardon by giving evidence against Savarkar." [1]

When preliminary hearing of the Dhingra trial commenced on July 10, at the Westminster Court, despite the evil advice to feign madness, Dhingra boldly asserted that he wished that the English Court of Law should sentence him to death, for in that case the vengeance of his countrymen would be all the keener. He further said: "Just as the Germans have no right to occupy this country, so the English people have no right to occupy India; and it is perfectly justifiable on our part to kill the Englishman who is polluting our sacred land. I am surprised at the terrible hypocrisy, the farce and the mockery of the English people." Dhingra made this *ex tempore* statement as the written statement found on his person at the time of his arrest was suppressed by the police who said that no such statement was recovered at all. Dhingra was then committed to Sessions.

In India also there were sky-high denunciations of the deed of Madanlal. N. C. Kelkar, at one such protest meeting, asked his audience to uproot the doctrine of violence. He said it was a poisonous tree which must not be allowed to grow, even in neglected corners. Kelkar was indeed a man of elastic convictions. Afterwards, while writing the life of Garibaldi, he openly glorified the sacrifice of revolutionaries as the fertilizer of the nation! Gokhale went one step further than Kelkar. He denounced the whole London group of about fifty revolutionaries and insinuated that their activities would not stop unless Savarkar was arrested.

Dhingra's Sessions trial was a formal affair. There, too, he repeated his demand that his statement suppressed by the police should be read, and offered no other defence. But the police persisted in their assumed ignorance of the statement as in the lower Court. The Court thereupon sentenced Dhingra to death and the trial ended.

[1] Niranjan Pal, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

Newspapers now directly attacked Savarkar as the source of the tragedy. In India his relations and colleagues were persecuted. Some lost their jobs, some their property and his father-in-law heroically faced sufferings. Harsh measures were adopted to crush the Indian students. Pandit Shyamji's Scholarship money for Spencer Lectureship was returned. The Pandit and Virendranath Chattopadhyaya lost their degrees as a result of their writings and propaganda. Though Savarkar passed the final examination of the Gray's Inn, the Benchers of his Inn declined to confer the degree upon him. Thereupon Savarkar made an appeal to the authorities of the Gray's Inn. They appointed a Committee to inquire into the affair. That Committee instituted an inquiry into the matter. Match as Savarkar was for the legal brains on the Committee and their cross-examination, nothing was proved against him though this Committee was aided by the Government of India. At last the Committee of the Gray's Inn decided to confer the degree upon Savarkar provided he gave them a written undertaking that he would never participate in politics. Savarkar rejected their offer *in toto*! Getting the degree was not his aim. His sole aim was to free his country and make it great and powerful. This barrister was not meant for conducting petty cases and amass wealth. He was the nation's barrister. He was destined to study the case of his Fatherland and put it before the world opinion as did Mazzini and Lenin. Hindusthan knows how from the sunshine of his youth to the golden evening of his life, he has been a loyal barrister all along defending and fighting for the absolute political Independence of India, her integrity and her honour.

Savarkar was now on the verge of physical collapse. For the last four years he had worked with a phenomenal energy. Persecution reached its climax. A yell of wrath fell on him from all quarters. As the India House was closed down just a few days before the Curzon Wyllie incident, Savarkar then resided for some days with Sri B. C. Pal. On the next day of Wyllie's death angry crowds stormed Pal's residence. Elder Pal told the mob that Savarkar was his guest and averted further consequences. Savarkar, however, thought it wise to leave his residence for their and his safety. Homeless, friendless,

starving, stranded and shadowed by C.I.D., he wandered from lodge to lodge and house to house for shelter. But who shelters a defeated Guru Govind Singh? Was not the defeated Tatya Tope betrayed? And so in a single day Savarkar had to quit two lodgings. From one of these he was ousted even at midnight! The C.I.D. men followed his shadow. No sleep, no rest, no food! At last a German landlady accepted him as a boarder for some days.

Fatigued and fagged out, Savarkar soon went to Brighton, a seaside English town, for a change. It was here sitting by the side of Niranjan Pal on the beach that in overwhelming emotions filled with helplessness and hopelessness in a foreign land, the deserted youth sobbed his glorious moving poem "Take me O Ocean! Take me to my native shores. Thou promised me to take me home. But thee coward, afraid of thy mighty master, Britain, thou hast betrayed me. But mind my mother is not altogether helpless. She will complain to sage Agasti and in a draught he will swallow thee as he did in the past." Several front rank poets and first-rate literary men of Maharashtra have regarded this poem as an unparalleled poem on patriotism. Foremost amongst them is the chief disciple of Gandhiji, Acharya Kaka Kalelkar, who described it as an inscription on the Marathi language.[1] Acharya Atre, a front rank playwright and journalist, recently commented in his address at a literary Conference at Indore that every lofty idea in this pathetic song represented a specimen of great life and great poetry! Thirty years after, describing the moving incident at Brighton, Niranjan Pal remarked: "It has been my supreme good fortune to have met and known almost all the great patriots and personalities of modern India, but I have yet to know of a patriot who loved his Motherland as dearly as Vinayak Damodar Savarkar."[2]

Even at Brighton Savarkar had an urgent feat to accomplish. It was the publication of Dhingra's suppressed statement before he was hanged. Savarkar, therefore, called his comrade, Gyanchand Varma, to Brighton and arranged for giving publicity to Dhingra's written statement which had been suppressed by the police. Two days gone, and Dhingra

[1] Kaka Kalelkar. *The Pratibha*, dated 15-1-1936.
[2] Niranjal Pal, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

would join eternity. Savarkar, therefore, resolved that Dhingra must see the statement published. Accordingly Savarkar got the copies of Dhingra's statement printed and Varma posted them from Paris to different American and Irish papers. It was difficult to find an English paper to publish the statement. But an Irishman working as an assistant editor on the *Daily News* undertook the job and inserted it in his paper during the night shift. The statement then exploded on the morning of the 16th August throughout London as a bombshell! The C.I.D. and police officers were sure it would never be published. It was in their possession. But they were outwitted and the statement entitled "Challenge" flashed throughout the world. The statement of Dhingra read as below:

"I admit, the other day, I attempted to shed English blood as an humble revenge for the unhuman hangings and deportations of patriotic Indian youths. . . . I believe that a nation held in bondage with the help of foreign bayonets is in a perpetual state of war. Since open battle is rendered impossible to a disarmed race, I attacked by surprise; since guns were denied to me, I drew forth my pistol and fired." The statement proceeds: "As a Hindu, I feel that a wrong done to my country is an insult to God." It concluded: "The war of independence will continue between India and England so long as the English and Hindu races last (if this present unnatural relation does not cease)."

This was the statement which Dhingra said he did not remember fully and a copy of which the police had secured at Dhingra's residence and another on his person. They had no idea that there were more copies in existence. How could Savarkar get a third copy and send it with Varma for being circulated and published all over the world? Some papers like the *London Times* openly spoke out their minds by saying that someone must have put these words into Dhingra's mouth! It was clear beyond doubt that the author of the statement was the leader himself!

Savarkar saw Dhingra in the Brixton Jail on July 22. He said to Madanlal, "I have come to have your *Darshan.*" On hearing the tribute to his sacrifice, glee played over his face and grateful tears appeared in his eyes. Dhingra's last wish

was that he should be burnt in conformity with Hindu rites, that no non-Hindu should touch his body, that his clothes and articles should be sold and the money should be donated to the National Fund! Is death more fearless than Madanlal? How many such peerless jewels has a slave country to dedicate for propitiating the Goddess of Freedom?

Delighted at the frustration of the police plan, Dhingra embraced gallows on August 17, 1909. His last words as explained in the statement were, "My wish is that I should be born again of the same Mother and that I should die the same death for her again." His dead body was not handed over to the London Hindus. Still Varma performed the funeral obsequies and got his head tonsured according to Hindu rites in honour of the great soul! Long live Dhingra for the intense love of his country! They never die who fall in a great cause! He fell with faith in his mission and in the destiny of his countrymen and love for his Motherland.

Dhingra's deed thrilled the entire world. Huge placards from Irish papers paid glowing tributes to Dhingra: "Ireland honours Madanlal Dhingra who was proud to lay down his life for the sake of his country." Only men like Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, however, who were then in London seemed to be unconcerned with the momentous deed. Later in life he has 'observed Gandhian Monday' over this thrilling episode even in his 'Autobiography'.

The storm raised by Dhingra did not immediately subside. Comments continued for a long time.

Mr. W. S. Blunt, author of *Secret History of the English Occupation of Egypt*, wrote about his interview with Mr. Lyne Stevens, the Doctor Royal friend. Blunt says: "He talked about the Dhingra assassination, which seems to have at last convinced his Royal friends that there is something wrong about the state of India. People talk about political assassinations as defeating its own end, but that is nonsense, it is just the shock needed to convince selfish rulers that selfishness has its limits of imprudence. It is like that other fiction that England never yields to threats. My experience is that when England has her face well slapped she apologises, not before."[1] Blunt further wrote in his Diaries that no Christian

[1] W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries, Part II* p. 276.

martyr ever faced his judges more fearlessly or with greater dignity and remarked that the day of Dhingra's execution would be regarded as one of martyrdom in India for generations.[1]

Lloyd George expressed to Winston Churchill his highest admiration of Dhingra's attitude as a patriot. Churchill shared the same views and quoted with admiration Dhingra's last words as the finest ever made in the name of patriotism. They compared Dhingra with Plutarch's immortal heroes.[2] Lala Hardayal wrote in the first issue of the *Bande Mataram*, started by Madame Cama: "In times to come, when the British Empire in India shall have been reduced to dust and ashes, Dhingra's monuments will adorn the squares of our chief towns, recalling to the memory of our children the noble life and noble death of one who laid down his life in a far-off land for the cause he loved so well."

And what kind of Swaraj was Dhingra's ideal for which he sacrificed his life? The Abhinava Bharat unequivocally proclaimed times without number its ideal of Swaraj in these words: "India must be independent; India must be united; India must be a republic; India must have a common language, and a common script. That script is Nagari, that language is Hindi. That Republic is that national form of Government in which the sovereign power—whether it be exercised by a Monarch or by a President, matters not much—rests ultimately and uncompromisingly in the hands of the Indian people."[3] The leader of Abhinava Bharat always repeated: "Before you destroy anything you must know what you are going to construct in its place." He had fully dwelt on the constitutional problem in his speeches and writings. His study in political science and constitutional law was far advanced.

In his famous leaflet addressed to the Indian Princes under the title, 'Choose O Indian Princes!' he states: "Whether the head of the Imperial Government of the Indian Nation be a President or a King depends upon how the revolution develops itself. . . . The Mother must be free, must be one and

[1] W. S. Blunt, *My Diaries, Part II*, p. 288.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 288.
[3] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 68.

united, must make her will supreme." The leaflet voices a warning to the Princes that the newly born nation would call them to account for their deeds and misdeeds and swearing by the blood of Dhingra, it thunders: "Choose whether you shall be the first of the nation's fathers or the last of the nation's tyrants." And the leaflet concludes with a threat: "When the mightiest of empires is trembling at the very birth-pangs of this revolution, you, weak as you are, cannot hinder its onward march or smother its birth any more than you can change the force of gravitation or the rotundity of the earth."[1]

It was a year before this momentous period that the leader of the Abhinava Bharat had tried to contact the Prime Minister of Nepal, then in London, and had appealed to him in a letter written in Dhingra's blood to play the Victor Emmanuel. Next day the representative of the Prime Minister sent his message to the representative of the Abhinava Bharat that "God's will shall prevail!"

II

In Savarkar one finds the unique combination of the bravery of Arjun and the poetry of Vyas. His pen was as powerful as his tongue. He was the leader of a revolutionary movement and a great literary power as well. He wielded both pen and pistol with equal command. Scarcely did a leader of any other revolutionary movement strike terror into the hearts of his enemies with his pen and pistol as he did. It is no wonder that his writings and ballads impressed effectively his personality on the Indian Revolution and inspired soldiers and patriots to fight the cause of freedom—from Rajaji to Roy, from Hardayal to Bhagat Singh, from Rajan to Kher, from Kanhere to Gogate and from the Ghadr to the I.N.A.!

It will, therefore, be appropriate to narrate the history of his inspiring books and writings at this juncture. During the first six months of his London life, Savarkar translated the autobiography of Mazzini into Marathi. This was the first book to enjoy an uncommon popularity in Maharashtra. It was so dearly loved that leading papers and leading men in

[1] Quoted in S. L. Karandikar's *Savarkar-Charitra*, pp. 317-18.

Maharashtra extolled it to the skies and it was taken out in procession by young and old devotees. Even Sir Valentine Chirol described this book as the Nationalist Textbook.[1] Savarkar's Mazzini naturally was the first victim of the Indian Press Act. The book was mostly loved for the introduction of the Indian Mazzini, expounding the great mission of the Italian patriot. The fiery propaganda and the burning patriotism of this immortal introduction captivated the minds of the people so much that, though it was suppressed by the Government, patriotic youths learnt it by heart and repeated the twenty-five pages of its inspiring introduction word by word! The book was restored in 1946 after having suffered proscription for forty years.

The Sikh front also absorbed Savarkar's mind. He learnt Gurumukhi, read all the religious and important original writings such as the *Adi Granth, the Panth Prakash, the Surya Prakash, Vichitra Natak* by the Gurus and other works on Sikhism, and issued many pamphlets. His pamphlet, named "Khalsa" and many others issued in Gurumukhi rained into the hands of Sikh soldiers, making them conscious of their duty and of the coming storm, and educating them for the cause of Freedom. This did not escape the notice of the Government of India.

Savarkar was a great pamphleteer. His brilliant leaflet 'O Martyrs' stirred the sleeping embers of patriotism in the hearts of both soldiers and patriots. He wrote in a moving tone: "For the war of 1857 shall not cease till the revolution arrives, striking slavery into dust, elevating liberty to the throne. . . . No, a revolutionary war knows no truce, save liberty or death! . . . But, O glorious Martyrs, in this pious struggle of your sons, help! . . . Whisper unto us the nobility of such an alliance of Religion and Patriotism, the true religion which is ever on the side of patriotism, the true patriotism which secures the freedom of religion! . . . With limited means you sustained a war, not against tyranny alone, but against tyranny and treachery together."[2]

After describing the noble war of Italian Independence in Europe, Savarkar invoked the warriors of 1857 to deliver his

[1] Sir Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, p. 146.
[2] Quoted in S. L. Karandikar's *Savarkar-Charitra*, pp. 213-15.

message through their own mighty words and mighty deeds. His aim in writing his book on 1857 was to inspire his people with a burning desire to rise again and wage a second successful war for the liberation of their Motherland. For achieving that goal, he always stressed the need for carrying politics and patriotism into the military forces of India.

Savarkar read at the India House heaps of original letters, numerous documents and several hundred books and all important references in the British Museum regarding 1857. He also read Rajanikant's *Sepoys' Mutiny* in the Bengali language. After incessant study and industry, he wrote in Marathi his famous work, *The First Indian War of Independence of 1857.* The manuscript came to India and went back to Paris, for no press dared publish it in India. The C.I.D. carried simultaneous surprise raids on several printing houses in Maharashtra for the manuscript, but failed. As the publication of his book in Marathi became difficult, some brilliant members of the Abhinava Bharat in London translated the manuscript into English. The agents of Scotland Yard succeeded in smuggling away through their agent a chapter of the original manuscript and thus the British and Indian Governments came to know of the coming book. The British C.I.D. slyly described the book as revolutionary, explosive and seditious. The two Governments were so much terror-stricken and became so much nervous that they proscribed the book hurriedly which they admitted was not even published! This book of Savarkar was the first book of its kind in the treasury of world literature that was proscribed *before it saw the light of day*! Unique honour to the author who stands unparalleled in this respect in the domain of the literary world. Savarkar took up the challenge and held the two Governments to caustic ridicule in the British, American and European Press! Even some of the British papers resented the shameless attitude of their Government.

There was after this a hot pursuit and intellectual fight for some time between Scotland Yard and the London Abhinava Bharat for preventing the publication on one side and accomplishing its publication on the other. At last Savarkar eluded the police and the C.I.D., and succeeded in getting the

book printed in Holland in 1909, though the British C.I.D. intervened in this affair in France and Germany.

Equally romantic was the history of its distribution and circulation! The book reached India, America, Japan and China wrapped in specially printed covers bearing fictitious names such as 'Pickwick Papers' and 'Scott's Works' and was sold at a fabulous price at times of Rs. 300 for a copy. Englishmen distributed copies of the book among their friends as a rare gift! Mr. Mahomed Ali obtained it on loan from Sir Charles Cleveland! European authors and historians read the work with great interest. The work became the talk of the world and since then it has gone through several editions in various languages.

Echoes and effects of the great work were visible in 1914. It inspired the second war of Indian Independence in 1914. All the leaders of the Ghadr party who had launched the Komagatamaru Rebellion had read the book with a religious zeal, and had drawn undying inspiration from the work. More tremendously did it influence the third war of Independence under the lead of Netaji Subhas Bose in 1943. The names of the battalions and divisions, songs and slogans, spirit and inspiration of the I.N.A. were derived from this holy book of Savarkar. Mr. K. F. Nariman wrote in "The Savarkar Special" of the *Free Hindusthan Weekly*, Bombay: "The idea of the I.N.A. and particularly the Rani of Jhansi Regiment seems to have originated from Veer Savarkar's proscribed publication on the great 1857 Revolution and Mutiny." Writing about it in the same number of the *Free Hindusthan*, Sri G. V. Subbarao, editor of *Goshti*, Bezawada, said: "If Savarkar had not intervened between 1857 and 1943, I am sure that the recent efforts of the I.N.A. would have been again dubbed as an ignoble mutiny effectively crushed by the valiant British-cum-Congress arms and armlessness! But thanks to Savarkar's book, Indian sense of a 'Mutiny' has been itself revolutionised. And not even Lord Wavell, I suppose, can now call the Bose effort a Mutiny! The chief credit for this change of values must go to Savarkar and to him alone. And that is why I call him the sun of our Indian firmament." In between these two wars of Independence the book has inspired innumerable martyrs and patriots who

called it the *Gita* of the revolutionaries. Sardar Bhagat Singh published this *Gita* in India for funds and propaganda. It was also published in the German language in 1942 by the Friends of India Society in Germany.

A great book is always born of the brain and heart of a great author and its greatness depends on the personality which gives life to it. In this respect Savarkar belongs to the line of Rousseau, Voltaire and Mazzini. They are master-minds. Their type forms a different category. They are great precursors of the coming storm, proclaimers of a new age and originators of a revolution. To them literature is not a mere ornament or entertainment for court life. Their literature burns with a mission for making free citizens out of virtual slaves. Their books are more dangerous than bombs. Their books are as decisive as battles! Rousseau's *Emile* was burnt, princes and potentates quailed before Voltaire and the Governments of two countries suppressed Savarkar's book even before it had been published! Rousseau, Voltaire and Savarkar are not to be measured along with common authors!

This world-famous brilliant and moving work is a story of human emotions, passions and aspirations. The sweep of the author's narration is vivid and irresistible. The work reveals the author's rare gift as a poet-historian in action. Writing about this book of Savarkar, Sir Valentine Chirol in his *Indian Unrest* has commented that it is "a very remarkable history of the Mutiny combining considerable research with the grossest perversion of facts and great literary power with most savage hatred!"[1] Deduct Chirol's venomous poison and the uncommon beauty and grandeur of the book will glow in its splendour! That is why Sir Valentine Chirol in his *India Old and New* depicts Savarkar with a loving hatred: "Savarkar, one of the most brilliant apostles of a later school of revolt."[2] Reviewing the great work, Sri P. K. Atre, a typical Maharashtrian author and journalist opined that Maharashtra did not produce a greater genius than Savarkar ever since the great Dnyaneshwar.

The book continued to be proscribed for thirty-eight years. Owing to the pressure of public opinion the Congress

[1] Sir Valentine Chirol, *Indian Unrest*, p. 149.
[2] Sir Valentine Chirol, *India New and Old*, p. 85.

Government released the book for publication when its mission was almost fulfilled. The romantic story of the book is not, however, yet complete. The original manuscript of this book was in those stormy days of its birth sent to safe custody. Mr. D. Y. Coutchino, a staunch member of the Abhinava Bharat, escaped to Portugal during those hectic days with the manuscript through his influence at the Portuguese Embassy and thence to America. Facing great difficulties and dangers as an Indian revolutionary, he treasured it as a monumental document for over thirty-eight years in Washington where he is a professor in a college, and returned it to Savarkar after India became free and independent. India lost another great book by Savarkar. That is the *History of the Sikhs* which Savarkar had finished in 1909. The manuscript of the book was sent to India for publication but was gulped down by the Indian Post Office in the transmission. It will be a great deed of national importance, if the Government of India or the Bombay Government, whichever may be in charge of the book, restores the manuscript. The reason why Savarkar's books were proscribed or gulped down was that Savarkar was to the British Government what Krishna was to Kaunsa or Shivaji to Aurangzeb. The Government's one obsession was to crush ruthlessly whatever emanated from Savarkar's brain. "Savarkar" had become synonymous with "sedition". The British Government of India must have, however, found that the Ganges was Savarkar's inspiration, martyr's blood was his ink and bones of heroes were his pen! The Ganges swept away the British-make dams, the ink reddened the pages of history and the pen immortalized the names of martyrs and patriots, and damned the traitors for ever!

III

After Dhingra's martyrdom threats grew louder. Clouds hung heavier. Winds blew with a terrific speed. The storm was coming on. Due to over-exertion, Savarkar's health was visibly impaired. Friends prevailed upon him to take rest in Paris where he was ultimately taken for a change sometime in January 1910. In Hindusthan his followers, comrades and relations were persecuted, prosecuted, executed or exiled into

the darkest Andamans. His elder brother was sentenced to transportation for life. His terrific transportation was avenged by a spirited and lion-hearted youth named Anant Kanhere. He shot dead Mr. A. M. T. Jackson, the then Collector of Nasik, in the Vijayanand theatre of Nasik. Kanhere died on the gallows with his two fearless comrades Deshpande and Karve on the last day of the year 1909.

At this juncture an attempt was made on the life of the Viceroy, Lord Minto, at Ahmedabad where a bomb was thrown by someone from the revolutionary party. As a result of the proceedings arisen out of this, Savarkar's younger brother Narayanrao Savarkar was arrested. All this news fell heavily on Savarkar. He now prepared himself to stand at the scene and save their persecution. Friends in Paris entreated him not to return to London as news had filtered into their ears that a warrant for his arrest was awaiting him in London. His friends said to him, "As a general, you must remain behind to lead. The danger is around you." But "No," said Savarkar, "I cannot see the persecution of my colleagues and followers. As a leader, I must face the music." To preach with life and not with mere lips, Savarkar left Paris. He started to save his soul and lose his life. He loved the former better. He was made of the stuff of martyrs. And martyrdom can be a religion only with a few and not with the whole party. His decision was as courageous as Shivaji's to go to Agra. And Shivaji started for Agra again!

It was Sunday, the 13th of March 1910. The train reached Victoria station, London. Here had come the much dreaded Savarkar at last, thought the London Police. The long accumulated fury burst on him. No sooner did he step out of the train than the policemen cried out: "Here he is! Here he is!" And they arrested him. Perinben Captain, who accompanied him, was let alone. The shadow of death was galloping after him. In the eyes of the policemen he read ruin. The day of his glory had come. The end also had come with a crash. But who knew then that his end was the beginning of the end of the British Empire?

Savarkar was arrested under a telegraphic warrant from the Bombay Government under the Fugitive Offenders Act of 1881. The warrant was granted by the Bow Street Court

on February 22, 1910. The charges against him were as under :—

(1) Waging war or abetting the waging of war against His Majesty the King Emperor of India;
(2) Conspiring to deprive His Majesty the King of the sovereignty of British India or a part of it;
(3) Procuring and distributing arms and abetting the murder of Jackson;
(4) Procuring and distributing arms in London and waging war from London;
(5) Delivering seditious speeches in India from January to March 1906 and in London from 1908 to 1909." [1]

An Empire's laws and system of justice are always soiled by the blood of the martyrs. Savarkar went to England for study under a regular passport from the Indian Government and now he was arrested as a fugitive offender! In 1910 he was arrested in England for the speeches he made in India in 1906! What a marvel this British process of law!

England has been the Mother of exiles. The knights-errant of liberty have found shelter in England. Here is an impressive roll-call: Mazzini, Marx, Garibaldi, Kossuth and Lenin. If Savarkar had been content to conceal his unbounded hatred of slavery and to pass as a reveller and degree-seeker, there would have been ample scope for his brilliant genius and flight of imagination. But no such pretension was possible for him. So the mother of exiles did not receive him well. The boast that England was the training ground for the patriots of the world was reduced to a farce. It was true only in the sense that England sheltered patriots only of those countries over which their Balance of Power politics hung. It was not a shelter for fearless freedom-loving Indian patriots whose country's fate England had sealed! The British took Savarkar to be a Nanasahib sworn to overthrow their yoke, a Guru Govind Singh in disguise or a Shivaji ready to foster a rebellion. So his life was a peril to the imperialists!

Gallows now stared Savarkar in the face. A terrible vengeance was let loose on his followers. These ardent patriots said they had come out to set their country free. And

[1] Guy A. Aldred, *The Herald of Revolt*, October 1912.

their leader in a befitting manner stood up at the peril of his life to practise what he preached.

After the arrest Savarkar was taken into Bow Street Police custody. He was now certain about the terrible fate that would befall his family. In order to soften the severe blow he wrote his last will and testament and sent it through his solicitors to his noble sister-in-law, Shrimati Yashodabai, Babarao's wife, whom he had no chance to meet this side of the grave. The testament represents the enormous stress of emotion under which he was reeling. His family was plunged in an irretrievable sorrow. His little son had just passed away! The eldest brother Babarao was sentenced to transportation for life, the younger brother was in jail and he himself in the Brixton jail. So his memory to the family was fragrant. His glorious promise and the sudden separation became the theme of their sorrow. This touched him to the core. He expounded in his poetic will the noble and sublime ideal for which the family had fallen. He reminded his sister :—

> "We will work and die in defence of Righteousness; thus had we pledged our words. Behold, the test has come, we enter the flames. We have kept our word. . . . We dedicated to Thee (Motherland) our thoughts; our speech and our eloquence we dedicated to Thee, O Mother! My lyre sang of Thee alone, my pen wrote of Thee alone. . . . Thy cause is holy! Thy cause I believed to be the cause of God! and in serving it I knew I served the Lord! . . . These are thy ideals! Thou art hero's better half! be thy life as supremely heroic. . . . Good-bye, dear Vahini, Good-bye. . . . Convey my best love to my wife and this :—
>
> That it was certainly not blindness that goaded us on to this path! No! we entered it under the full blaze of the searching light of Logic, History and Human Nature: knowing full well that a Pilgrim's Progress leads through the valley of Death, we took up our Cross and deliberately followed Him."

Savarkar was produced at the Bow Street Police Court on March 14, 1910. After some postponements, on April 20, the

Magistrate refused to release him on bail. Upon this Savarkar was transferred from Bow Street Police Custody to Brixton jail, wherein he had a famous friend. There an Englishman by name Guy A. Aldred was also undergoing imprisonment for having published Shyamji Krishna Varma's fiery paper, *Indian Sociologist*, suppressed by the British Government. Aldred was the first Briton to suffer imprisonment for the cause of India's freedom! Strangely enough, he had appeared in the same dock, in the same court, before the same Magistrate and had faced the same Chief Inspector of Police, Mr. McArthy, and Mr. S. A. T. Rowlatt, Junior Counsel to the Treasury, who later achieved notoriety in India. Savarkar's comrades saw him in the Brixton jail. Writing about his last meeting with Savarkar in Brixton jail, Niranjan Pal states: "I asked Savarkar why he ignored our warnings and pleadings and left Paris knowing full well that a former comrade had turned an approver and a warrant for his arrest was awaiting in London." Pal adds: "Therefore, had Savarkar wished it, he could easily have remained in safety and comfort in the French Capital as other Indian revolutionists were doing in those days. Instead he came to London to be arrested, because, he told me, standing behind the iron-bars of Brixton Prison, his shoulders were broad enough to bear the consequences. He had the courage of his conviction." [1]

On May 12 the Magistrate gave his decision that Savarkar should be sent to India for trial. Mr. Vaughan, counsel for Savarkar made an application for a writ of Habeas Corpus. The appeal made against the decision of the Bow Street Court and this Habeas Corpus application were discussed on June 2 and 3 before the Divisional Court. The Chief Justice upheld the decision of the Bow Street Court. Once again an appeal was made against this decision to the Court of Appeal. But the Chief Justice Vaughan Williams upheld the decision of the Divisional Court and sympathetically handed Savarkar over to the Indian Government which under a special ordinance had created a Special Tribunal in India for Savarkar's trial. Mr. Justice Coleridge dissented from sending Savarkar to India but his decision was waived as a minority view.

[1] Niranjan Pal, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

In the meanwhile, somewhere in May 1910 Irish and Indian revolutionaries also attempted at rescuing Savarkar while he was an undertrial prisoner. They lay in ambush awaiting the police van which carried the illustrious prisoner to the Court and back to the Prison. But it seems that the plan leaked out and the police van which they waylaid turned out *to be a vacant one!* For Savarkar had been taken by a different route. Savarkar's other comrades also struggled heroically for his release. Someone had thought out a plan of impersonating Savarkar in his cell, but failed. They paid their loyal homage to their leader. Savarkar was now on the eve of being extradited to India. Therefore he thought it his loving duty to bid farewell to his comrades in England and on the Continent. This farewell is a masterpiece of patriotism, humanism and duty! It is an illustration of great poetry, great ideas, great vision and great life! It is as follows : —

THE FAREWELL

" Whose heart to heart by silken ties is knit
Of friendship sweet, that sweeter grows by far,
Partaking of Godly Sacrament of Mother's creed divine :
Oh friends! Farewell! as tender and fresh
As the morning dew that wakes the fragrance
Friends adieu! adieu!!

GOD-APPOINTED DUTY

We part to play our God-appointed parts
Now pent and nailed to burning Rocks, now tossed
On surging waves of Fame; now seen now lost
Or humble or exalted—wherever posted by the Lord
Of Hosts, yet posted best, as if alone it was
The mission of our life thus there to act.

HISTORIC STAGE

As in some oriental play sublime,
All characters, the dead as well as living
In Epilogue they meet
Thus actors we innumerable all once more shall meet

On History's copious stage before the great
Applauding audience of Humanity
That would with grateful cheer fill hill and dale
Till then Oh loving friends, Farewell ! Farewell !

Humanity to Guide

Wherever may my humble ashes lie
In the Andaman's sad brook whose weeping course
Add to its dreariness a tongue or stored by Ganga's
Sacred crystal stream in which the stars
Their midnight measures dance—
They will be stirred with fire and glow
When Victory's trumpet, blasts proclaiming
' Shree Ram has crowned his chosen people's brow
With laurels golden green ! The evil spirit is cast
Away and chased back to the deep from whence
It first arose ! and Lo ! She lordly stands,
Our Mother Ind, a beacon light Humanity to guide,
Oh martyred saints and soldiers, do awake !
The battle is won which you fought and fell !!
Till then Oh loving friends, farewell ! farewell !

Sacrifice a Law

Watch sleeplessly the progress of our mother
And learn to count it, not by so much work
Done or tried, but by how much they suffered,
What sacrifice our people could sustain !
For work is chance but sacrifice a law ;
Foundation firm to rear a mighty Dome
Of Kingdoms new and great !
But only great if their roots be in martyr's ashes laid
Thus work for Mother's glory till God's breath
Be rendered back, the Godly mission done—
A martyr's wreath or victor's crown be won ! ! "[1]

The British Government thus gave a sigh of relief, like the ferocious Aurangzeb, at having trapped Shivaji at last ; and they shipped him off.

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans.*

CHAPTER V

Epic Escape and World-Famous Trials

I

On the first day of July 1910, the steamer S.S. MOREA conveying Savarkar to India started on her historic voyage from London! Proud like a kite, she held her prey in the clutches. She tossed on. But woe followed the waves. The book of fate was signed and sealed by destiny! There was some engine trouble and the MOREA required repairs in the neighbourhood of the port of Marseilles. So she anchored at Marseilles on Thursday evening, July 7, 1910. On June 29 the British Government had informed the French Government that the MOREA was bound for India with a political prisoner, and requested the French Government to watch the steamer, if she anchored at Marseilles, and to guard against any possible attempt of Savarkar's rescue by the Indian revolutionaries on the Continent. Mr. Parkar, the C.I.D. officer from London and Mr. Power, Assistant Superintendent of Police from Bombay, were in charge of the illustrious prisoner.

Though tied to a sacrificial post, Savarkar talked freely, during the course of the journey, to the amazement of the passengers. Inwardly he was revolving the idea of escape. He had thrown a measuring eye at the port-holes. The halt at Marseilles put his heart in a flutter. Had his message to the comrades on the Continent reached them through Aiyer? Would they come to his rescue? Night was coming on. His expectations now darkened into anxieties. All night long restlessness tortured him and doubts assailed him. Dawn broke. His thoughts now galloped. Mother Ind seemed to whisper to her darling son: "Flee! flee! the time is not gone! Oh! my son! I would not see your neck in the rope! Did you forget that my great son Krishna ran away when persecuted by the tyrant Jarasandha? Don't you remember

the historic escape of my Shivaji from Agra? Would you not learn anything from the daring escape of Napoleon from Elba? Flee! flee! your flight will bring to light the heroic endeavours of my sons to shatter my fetters. You are not a mouse to be easily trapped. You are the President of a revolutionary party. Flee, for my sake, flee! Now or never!"

An inspired ray appeared in Savarkar's eyes. He collected himself. His heart throbbed with the thought of swift escape. His face lit with a fire of decision. Yes, he was a lion, and he would not die the death of a mouse. He resolved to venture. He stood up! It was now morning. Both the officers in charge were asleep. He asked the guard on watch to take him to the water closet. The guard woke up his companion. Savarkar bit his lips! Both accompanied him. And Savarkar had to play a ruse. He asked one of the guards to fetch some article left behind. He went. Savarkar entered the water closet and bolted it from within. The guard was rather inattentive. There was a glass pane fitted in the door of the water closet. This was a special arrangement for watching the man inside.

There was no time to lose. Savarkar's actions were more rapid than his thoughts. He took off his night gown which he had purposely put on and threw it over the glass pane of the water closet. Then in the twinkling of an eye, he jumped up, squeezed himself out of the porthole at the top of the water closet, and murmuring 'Hail! thee, Goddess of Liberty!' jumped into the sea. The guard caught sight of him. "He is off!" shouted the guard. There was a din on the steamer. The guards opened fire at the escaping prisoner. Savarkar heard bullets whizzing by. This was the time to put to test his hard-won skill in swimming and climbing. The glorious son of Hindusthan now dived, now swam through the shower of bullets, reached the steep end of the harbour of Marseilles, and climbed the quay. Once he fell down, like the lizard before Brutus, in his attempt at climbing the quay. The second time he succeeded and ran off. The pursuing marine gendarmes who had jumped after him could not catch him. He was free, legally, mentally and bodily! He had scored a triumph, and held the British Government to ridicule. Britannia might be once ruling the waves, but she could not

rule the waves that carried Savarkar to the shore of France; nor could she rule the waves created by Savarkar, which turned the ship of his Motherland from slavery to Swaraj!

The pursuers were in hot chase. Savarkar ran excitedly for about five hundred yards from the harbour. He saw trams running, policemen on duty. He wanted to hire a cab. But he had no money. His freedom for a coin! So he asked a policeman on duty in broken French to take him to the nearest Magistrate, but the policeman did not pay attention to him. The pursuers who had now overtaken him all the while crying out "Thief! Catch him!" greased the palm of the policeman, and with his connivance dragged Savarkar to the steamer. It was clearly a breach of International Law. The British guards had arrested Savarkar on a foreign land!

It was fated that Savarkar's colleagues, Madame Cama and Aiyer, who had planned his rescue, should be late by a few hours. They were driving post-haste towards the harbour. They reached the scene to hear the crowds gossiping with their eyes and fingers towards the steamer. They must have cursed themselves. All day long the whole of Marseilles was agog! Crowds flocked towards the harbour. And mortified at the disgrace, the MOREA set sail early next morning.

The news of Savarkar's thrilling escape on July 8, 1910, crossed the oceans. India's cry for freedom filled the skies, and Mother Ind's heart-rending bewailings stirred the world. India was discussed for the first time in foreign countries. Hindu manhood glowed in resplendent glory and opened the eyes of foreign institutions which doubted the virility and valour of India. The entire European Press published the Hindu hero's life as best as it could and compared him with Mazzini, Garibaldi and Kossuth, and stamped him as a martyr. Daring and devoted nation-builders like Shivaji, Napoleon, Churchill in 1916, De Valera in 1918 and Subhas Bose in 1941 performed miraculous escapes, but Savarkar's escape was the most heroic and thrilling the world ever witnessed! It is an epic and unique example of 'propaganda by deed.'

Enraged at their discomfiture and filled with fear of degradation in service, the officers in charge, once back on the MOREA with their charge, began to use foul, filthy and violent language about Savarkar. They even threatened him with

torture at nightfall! One of them exclaimed, "What a breed these Savarkars are!" Savarkar rebuked the boiling guards and officer sternly. He had watched one officer keeping a loaded revolver in his trousers just over his head. Sure of that support at hand, Savarkar struck them dumb with these words: "Look here, you are taking me to the gallows. It is quite natural that I should try my best to escape. If you want to live by the side of your wife and children, take care not to insult or touch me. For I have already set fire to my home and will not fail to vindicate my self-respect and safety by all means. Be then prepared for the eventualities." The guards understood the gravity of the situation and kept mum! At Aden the s.s. SASTI took charge of MOREA passengers and post. The guards huddled Savarkar into a tiny cabin, only a space of four feet was allowed to him to stand, move and walk! Sunlight became a luxury for him. Hand-cuffed and closely tied to each guard by turns on one side, stiffled by excessive heat and crushed by a colossal disappointment on the other, Savarkar had to stand a tide of tense feelings for throwing away life at once! But he overcame the feelings and survived.

Savarkar's failure at Marseilles was, however, glorious. A noble failure serves the world no less than a crowning success. And crushing failures have often in them the germs of a glorious future. Our greatest glory, says Goldsmith, consists not in never failing, but in rising every time we fall.

II

The s.s. SASTI reached Bombay without any mishap. On July 22, 1910, the prince of Indian revolutionaries was received at the Bombay Harbour in a befitting manner. Handcuffed, he was marched through rows of drawn swords. A close motor-van transferred him to a closed special train which delivered him to the Nasik Police custody. Few days later, he was brought to the Yeravada Jail. Mr. Joseph Baptista, his counsel, interviewed him on September 13, 1910, at the instance of Madame Cama. Mr. Baptista had already received the papers of the case from Mr. Vaughan, Savarkar's London solicitor.

Under a Special Tribunal Act a Special Tribunal was appointed to try the case without a jury or a right of appeal. The tribunal was composed of the Chief Justice of Bombay, Sir Basil Scott, Sir N. G. Chandavarkar and Mr. Justice Heaton. The Counsels for the prosecution were an imposing array. Mr. Jardine, the Advocate-General, Bombay, Mr. Weldon, Sri Welinkar and Mr. Nicolson, the Public Prosecutor. The defence consisted of legal luminaries like Mr. Joseph Baptista, Sri Chitre, Sri Govindrao Gadgil and Sri Rangnekar. Three trials were to be heard by the Tribunal. The first trial involved thirty-eight accused including Savarkar, the second involved Savarkar and Gopalrao Patankar, both co-accused in the first and the second trials. In the third, Savarkar was alone! All were to be tried under eight different charges. Kashinath Ankushkar, Dattatray Joshi, W. R. Kulkarni and Chaturbhuj, the cook of the India House with whom Savarkar was alleged to have sent twenty Browning pistols to India, were the approvers.

Savarkar was transferred from the Yeravada Jail to the Dongri Jail in Bombay to stand his trial. The trial opened on September 15, 1910. A Special party of fifty armed police guarded the High Court. The Police Commissioner of Bombay personally supervised the police arrangements in the Court. Only few representatives of newspapers were permitted into the Court. Savarkar was brought to the Court in a closed van under an armed escort. As soon as he stepped into the dock, he heard the sound of clapping! It was a stark surprise. He looked at the empty galleries and saw vacant benches. He saw nobody there. Who welcomed him then? They were his co-accused in the dock down below. They gave a spontaneous ovation to their leader of international fame! A unique reception and homage in the political history of the world by those who stood on the threshold of death to a leader who awaited the same fate! To the pleasant surprise of his comrades, he recognised after a few moments' guess his brother, Narayanrao, in the dock, now grown into a fine youth. The trial opened like a great thrilling drama. Savarkar's thrilling escape at Marseilles had rivetted the attention of the world on the Nasik Conspiracy Trial at Bombay. Hindusthan watched it with mixed feelings of horror and anxiety.

Silence was proclaimed. The Chief Prosecution Counsel, Mr. Jardine, rose and made the opening speech for the prosecution, and occupied the whole of the first day's proceedings. When the Court resumed hearing on 26th September, it was argued before the Tribunal that they should stay the proceedings and allow Savarkar's appeal against his arrest at Marseilles to go to the French and British Governments. This objection was overruled. On the 27th and 28th September the Advocate-General continued his speech. After two prosecution witnesses were examined and cross-examined, the Court asked Savarkar to cross-examine them if he so desired. Thereupon Savarkar rose and stated before the Tribunal that he did not recognise the jurisdiction of the Indian Government to try him as he was entitled to the Right of Asylum and therefore to the protection of French Law. He added that he had entirely abandoned himself to the French Nation, the land of Fraternity, Equality and Liberty, and so he would not take any part in the trial. On the same day Savarkar's counsel Mr. Baptista raised the point that Savarkar's arrest was illegal. The Court overruled the objection. On October 1, 1910, the provisions of the Extradition Act were fully discussed. When asked by the Court, Savarkar refused to say anything on the point. The Court declared its opinion that Savarkar's illegal arrest at Marseilles did not affect the powers of the Indian Law Courts to try him. During the course of the trial, the prosecution withdrew the charge against Savarkar that the accused had waged war against His Majesty the King. Thus the second trial ended before its start. During the protracted trial many witnesses for the prosecution were mangled. About three hundred witnesses were examined and cross-examined. Majority of the accused complained to the Court that they had given their statements before the Magistrate under tortures or for saving their relations from harassment at the hands of the police and the same should not be taken to be true.

After the witnesses came the statements of the accused. When the Chief Justice asked Savarkar to have his say, he stated, "I am quite innocent of the charges laid against me. I took part in the proceedings of the trial in England where courts are established by democratic rules sanctioned by the

people. In such courts, one can expect to get justice. There the authority does not rely upon brute force. The condition of Indian Courts of Law is quite the reverse. I am not amenable to the Jurisdiction of Indian Courts of Law. I, therefore, decline to give any statement or bring any evidence for my defence."

Then followed the arguments of the counsels. The Advocate-General made a long speech which lasted for a week. Though Savarkar's name was last on the list of the accused, he began with Savarkar ! The defence Counsels took a little more than a week to complete their addresses. One of the accused, Gangaram Rupchand, read out his own statement in his defence.

Chief of the revolutionary party as he was, Savarkar bore himself with courage and dignity throughout the trial. Dressed in a fine European suit, he glowed with smiles, intelligence and brilliance. He looked like a hero confident of his cause. He had made a sincere appeal to his co-accused to throw as much brunt and responsibility upon him alone as possible and try to mitigate their sufferings, and secure their acquittal. Such a life and death struggle could not embarrass him. On the contrary he helped the defence Counsels by jotting down points for cross-examination. Throughout the trial he cheered up the broken-hearted, and encouraged others. The end was near at last. The accused discussed among themselves about their crowns and crosses. A cross or gallows or transportation was considered first class. Lesser sentences were considered second class or pass class according to the period of the sentence, and an acquittal was deemed a failure !

At last came the day of judgment after sixty-eight days of protracted trial. It was Saturday, the 23rd of December 1910. The judges took their seats amid pin-drop silence. After reading the judgment the Chief Justice began to announce sentences and started with Savarkar. He announced: " Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, the sentence of the Court upon you is transportation for life and forfeiture of all your property." The sentences on the other accused followed.

The Court struck the leader when he was gagged. The decision was *ex parte.* The legality of his arrest on French soil did not matter to the Tribunal. That he was before them

during the trial was sufficient. The fact that he was brought to India on an illegal warrant was not a point of consideration for their just heads. What a glaring strain on law and outrage on the International Law!

The Special Tribunal passed judgment on a man whose case was *sub judice* in the International Court at the Hague! In a country swayed by imperialism, justice also assumes an imperious face and imperils truth. It is not justice. It is the dark desire for domination. The vulgarity of the saying, "Everything is fair in love and war," is seen in its hideous colour during such great political trials. The party or Government in power sets lawyers busy not to find truth and give justice, but to find reasons for upholding the predetermined legal answers! Did not Englishmen try Mary Queen of Scots though they had no power or right to do so? Even so did they try Savarkar. Mary was not born an English subject, nor was she ever denizated. One more sovereign point. It is the received doctrine that a foreign sovereign is immune from all processes of law. Her death was a political necessity and Mary's head fell on the scaffold!

Out of the other thirty-seven accused in this famous Nasik Trial, Shankar Vaidya, Vinayak Barve, and Vinayak Fulambrikar were set at liberty at the commencement of the trial. Vinayak Gaydhani, Ramchandra Kothe, Govind Bapat, Hari Thatte, Trimbak Jog, Shankar Mahajan, Mukund Moghe and Keshav Paranjpe—these eight were acquitted. Keshav Shripad Chandvadkar *alias* Brahmagiri Buwa was sentenced to transportation for fifteen years. Gopalrao Patankar, Krishnaji Khare, and Trimbakrao Marathe—these three were sentenced to ten years' rigorous imprisonment each; Damodar Chandratrye, Purushottam Dandekar, Gopal Dharap, Sakharam Gorhe and Vishnu Bhat—these five to five years' each; Shridhar Shidhaye, Waman Palande, Damodar Paranjpe and Raghunath Bhave—these four to four years' each; Vishnu Kelkar and Kashinath Tonape—these two to three years' each; Purushottam Gokhale, Anant Konakar and Vishwasrao Davre—these three to three years' each; Vinayak Tikhe, Balwant Barve and Sakharam Kashikar—these three to two years' each; and Vinayak Manohar, Gangaram Rupchand,

Narayanrao Savarkar and Raghunath Ambedkar—these four were sentenced to six months' rigorous imprisonment each.

When the judges rose, the patriot-prisoners sprang up to their feet and shouted "Hail! thee, Goddess of Liberty!" even on their way to the savage jails. The judges were startled and looked back. The police rushed in. In the dock Savarkar tried to bid good-bye to his brother, but was not allowed to do so. So he waved his hat, and under the escort he walked steadily away from the court with his princely countenance.

The judgment in Savarkar's trial deals exhaustively with various political and secret activities of the Abhinava Bharat, its inflaming pamphlets, its books, its plans and aims and says: "There is evidence in the shape of certain documents found in the possession of the accused Kashikar, shortly after the arrest of Ganesh Savarkar in 1909, which indicates that the association aimed at some sort of organization founded upon the model of Revolutionary Societies in Russia. The suggested methods of preparation for war are the purchase and storing of weapons in neighbouring countries to be used when opportunity should occur; the opening of many very small but secret factories at some distance from one another for the manufacture of weapons clandestinely in the country seeking independence and the purchase by secret societies of weapons in other countries to be secretly imported in merchantships."

This was an historically true assessment of the Abhinava Bharat. The Society had storehouses of bombs at Bassein and other places. Bomb factories were also started and were working in the suburbs of Bombay and other places in Maharashtra. After describing Savarkar's various activities the Judges observe; "We find the accused guilty of the abetment of waging war by instigation, by the circulation of printed matter inciting to war, the providing of arms and the distribution of instructions for the manufacture of explosives. He is, therefore, guilty of an offence punishable under Section 121-A of the Indian Penal Code. We also find him guilty of conspiring with the other accused to overawe, by criminal force or show of criminal force, the Government of India and the Local Government."

But the tragedy did not stop here! Not content with one

transportation for Savarkar the Indian Government of Lord Hardinge and the Bombay Government of Lord Sydenham instituted a second case against Savarkar, this time charging him with abetment of the murder of Mr. Jackson, the Collector of Nasik! The Indian Government dreaded his return even after serving a sentence for twenty-five years! It was mad with vengeance! It knew that a day for this man was a month for others! The same Tribunal was to try him. The show was one-sided like the former one. Savarkar maintained his incontrovertible stand even in this trial, refused to stand to their judgment, and prejudice his case at the International Court. But it mattered little to the Tribunal.

This trial opened on January 23, 1911. After the Advocate-General's summing-up, Savarkar was brought from the Dock to the Bar to have his say. Savarkar reiterated his innocence and said that he had no direct or indirect connection with the crime. He pointed out to the Court that the only evidence that came before the Tribunal of his alleged complicity was the pamphlet, *Bande Mataram*, found with Chengirirao. But that too was not concerned with Jackson's murder; because it was clear from the evidence that it was despatched from London *after* the murder, he added. As for the pistol, which was used in killing Jackson, it was strenuously contended that there was no sufficient proof that Savarkar was the person, who entrusted the twenty Browning pistols to the cook Chatturbhuj with one of which Jackson was killed.

Despite these overwhelming odds, however, on January 30, 1911, the Tribunal sentenced Savarkar to another transportation for life! Upon this Savarkar rose and declared: "I am prepared to face ungrudgingly the extreme penalty of your laws, in the belief that it is through sufferings and sacrifice alone that our beloved Motherland can march on to an assured, if not a speedy, triumph!"[1]

Two transportations! Unsurpassable, unheard of! Release after half a century! A unique record and a landmark in the political history of the world! It is significant that the judgments of these famous trials have not been reported in the law reports!

Was Savarkar shocked at the savage sentences passed upon

[1] Chitra Gupta, *Life of Barrister Savarkar*, p. 117.

him? Not in the least. He had entered the sacrificial conflagration with iron will and divine devotion. Nothing conquered his invincible spirit, for nature had given him the stoutest heart of his age that could not be crushed by adversity or peril. He fell. He fell for a cause for which Nanasahib died, Tatya Tope fell and the glorious Maha Rani Laxmibai gave her life on the battle-field. The punishment inflicted upon Savarkar was titanic, but his indomitable spirit was an iceberg. He was aged twenty-seven years, eight months and three days when Government laid him in his veritable grave!

The brave son of Hindusthan gave a message to the Indian youths! The youths, who were acquitted in the first trial, brought a burning message in the following poetic lines from their leader:

FIRST INSTALMENT

"Pleased be Thou, Mother! to acknowledge this little Service of Thy children.

Boundless is our indebtedness to Thee! Thou chose us to bless and suckle us at Thy breast!

Behold! We enter the flames of this consecrated Fire to-day. The first instalment of that debt of Love we pay.

And totally a new birth there and then will we immolate ourselves over and over again till the hungry God of Sacrifice be full and crown Thee with glory.

With Shree Krishna for Thy redoubtable Charioteer, and Shree Ram to lead, and thirty crores of soldiers to fight under Thy banner.

Thy army stops not though we fall!

But pressing on shall utterly rout the forces of Evil and Thy right hand, Oh Mother, shall plant the golden Banner of Righteousness on the triumphant tops of the Himalayas." [1]

III

The Indian Government prosecuted Savarkar post-haste. As a matter of fact and on principle, the Special Tribunal should have stayed the proceedings from September 25, 1910, as Sir Edward Grey, the Foreign Secretary of the British

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans.*



Pandit Shyamji Krishna Varma



Savarkar in London



Madanlal Dhingra



Madame Cama



India House in 1909—*Standing (left to right)* Mitra, M. P. T. Acharya, Harnamsingh, Syed Haider Reza, Dr. Rajan, Servant (Czech). *Sitting (left to right)*: V. V. S. Aiyer, Gyanchand Varma, Savarkar, Niranjan Pal, Khan, Lal Govind Amin



Hardayal



Guy A. Aldred

Government, had signed an agreement with M. Paul Cambon, the Ambassador of the French Republic, on that day and agreed to refer the Savarkar case to the International Court at the Hague. This, of course, he had done because of popular French clamour for justice to Savarkar and in recognition of the sovereignty of France.

But this agreement was a result of a powerful agitation of the people and the press. The sensational news of Savarkar's escape first appeared in a few lines in the Paris edition of the *Daily Mail* of July 11. Savarkar's colleagues, who had failed in their attempts at rescuing Savarkar at Marseilles, wired from Marseilles the news of the thrilling escape of their leader to the *L'Humanite*, a Socialist newspaper in Paris, edited by M. Jean Languet, the grandson of Karl Marx. He flashed the news of Savarkar's escape on July 12. Pandit Shyamji, Madame Cama and Ranaji lost no time in contacting the great Socialist leader of France, Monsieur Jaures who was also the Mayor of Marseilles and other French influential leaders. M. Jaures took up the cause and voiced the demand for the return of Savarkar to France. *L'Eclaire*, *Le Temps*, *Le Matin* and all other national newspapers of France joined the attack and a storm of protest reigned over France against the illegal arrest of Savarkar on their soil. In England Guy A. Aldred, the young editor of the *Herald of Revolt*, who was released in July 1910, also raised a hue and cry for Savarkar's release by his incessant appeals, untiring speeches and a chain of articles on behalf of 'the Savarkar Release Committee' which was established in London in August 1910. Aldred stressed the illegality and immorality of the warrant of the Indian Government and appealed to all freedom-loving citizens of the world to demand Savarkar's release. Embassies all over the world, too, were stirred. Monsieur Pierron, Assistant Ambassador of Spain, Monsieur Jambon, Assistant Ambassador of Paraguay, and the Ambassador of Portugal at Calcutta expressed their opinion that the French demand for Savarkar's return to France was lawful. According to International Law the surrender of a fugitive must be a national act and not a local act. This point was also hotly discussed in the French Press. In short, "Savarkar's extraordinary heroism at Marseilles was applauded by the impartial press of the world.

His whole career, his patriotic exploits in India and England were recounted at great length everywhere,"[1] and almost all European press supported the French Press in its demand for the return of Savarkar to France. In view of these discussions in the world press in general and the blaze of protest in the French press in particular, the French Government at last made a demand for the return of Savarkar to France.

The British Premier, Mr. Asquith, declared on July 29, 1910, in the House of Commons that the French Government had demanded the return of Savarkar. At the outset English statesmen tried to hush up the matter, calling it their home affair. Papers like the *London Times* opined that international law on the point was not authoritatively settled!

At this juncture Savarkar smuggled a statement of the authentic account of his escape and re-arrest at Marseilles through the Yeravada Jail to his friends in Europe, and gave a fresh impetus to the whole affair. The statement was circulated throughout the world press, and a vigorous demand was again put forward for Savarkar's return to France. The entire French press demanded with one voice the return of Savarkar to France in vindication of the Right of Asylum. The Socialist Conference of Europe in its Copenhagen Session held in September 1910, demanded Savarkar's return to France, and as a result of this national and international pressure the French Republic had to renew its demand for Savarkar's restoration in vindication of its sovereignty. And at last the British Government had to yield.

Thereupon England's Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, and M. Paul Cambon, the French Ambassador in London, signed a six-articled agreement as related above, and submitted to arbitration the question of Savarkar's arrest at Marseilles and return to the Republic. Articles 1, 2 and 3 deal with the duty, composition and working of the Arbitration Tribunal. The fourth article defines the place and representation on the Tribunal and the fifth article lays down that the proceedings of the Tribunal would be either in the French or the English language and the decision in the two languages. The sixth article defines the time limit.

The British opinion was not wholly on the side of its

[1] Indulal Yajnik, *Shyamaji Krishnavarma*, p. 289.

Government in this affair. There were some voices of dissent. Sir Henry Cotton, speaking at the residence of B. C. Pal at a small gathering held in honour of the New Year, 1911, saw Savarkar's portrait in the hall. He admired Savarkar's intellect, courage and patriotism, although he warned the Indian youths not to waste their energy in that way. He then openly appreciated Savarkar's claim to the Right of Asylum and expressed the hope that the British Government would hand him over to France. There was a huge uproar against Sir Henry Cotton. Some suggested to the British Government to stop his pension and even revoke his knighthood !

From the first M. Briand, the Prime Minister of France, did not act sincerely in this matter. Under fear of a powerful and threatening Germany M. Briand looked upon England as a friend. Naturally powerful nations like Germany and Russia were dropped out from the panel of the Tribunal and small nations were selected on it. The Hague International Tribunal was composed of M. Beernaert, ex-Prime Minister of Belgium as its President, M. Graham, an ex-Minister of Norway, Mr. Jonkheer Loman, a Member of the Second Chamber of Holland, England's Earl of Desert and France's Louis Renault as its members. M. Louis Renault was an eminent jurisconsult, an authority on international law, a permanent Member of the Hague Tribunal and winner of the Nobel Prize in 1907. This world-famous trial opened on February 16, 1911, and though expected to last about a month as stated in article six of the agreement, wound up its work after a few hurried sittings. On February 24, 1911, they gave judgment in favour of the British Government, "admitting that an irregularity was committed in the arrest of Savarkar and in his being handed over to the British Police."

The judgment was a shock to freedom-loving minds all over the world. *The Morning Post* of England, *The Post* in Germany, the *Daily News* of England, described this Award of the Hague Tribunal as something that reduced the "Right of Asylum" and International Law to a farce. Vehemently criticising this gross outrage on International Law, Guy A. Aldred in his editorial in the *Herald of Revolt* of March 1911, writes : "Savarkar has been damned to a life of sojourn in an Indian dungeon by the infamy of a man who previously

betrayed the French proletariat. But for the latter's agitation against the Hindu patriot's irregular arrest at Marseilles on July 8th last—and Briand's fears of a general strike,—the French Premier would never have invited the decision which brought about his resignation three days later. The Hague Award, annulling the Right of Asylum, was only possible because Aristide Briand voluntarily betrayed the sovereignty of France." This gross violation of the Right of Asylum and the grave injustice perpetrated on Savarkar were bitterly criticised also by the *La Societe Nouvelle* published at Mons in Belgium. Its editorial in its issue of March 1912 said: "England's infamous empire rests on blood, ferocious repression and officially acknowledged systematic tyranny." Dora Marsden, editor of *The Freewoman*, fearlessly attacked the Hague Award and published Aldred's vigorous article under the title "The Savarkar infamy." A German fortnightly published at Zurich, Switzerland, called *Der Wanderer* editorially supported Aldred's work in connection with Savarkar's case. Most of the British, German, American, Italian and the entire French press condemned the Hague judgment.[1]

The consequences of the Hague decision were enormous and far-reaching. The betrayal by Briand was so grave and ruinous that only three days after the Hague Award he resigned rather than face the questions in the Chamber of Deputies. On the day of this Hague decision the Russian Duma passed a bill annulling the right of political asylum! As a reward for this marvellous blackmail in connection with Savarkar's case at the Hague, Mr. Eyre Alexander Crowe, an assistant in the Foreign Affairs Office of Britain, was knighted in 1911.

The international issue in the Savarkar case was thus foully settled. But the agitation for the release of Savarkar sponsored by Aldred and Pandit Shyamji went on unabated till the outbreak of World War I when Aldred was imprisoned for anti-war propaganda and Pandit Shyamji had to shift his headquarters to Geneva. But during that period Pandit Shyamji had spread the agitation all over Europe. It was

[1] Guy A. Aldred, editor of *The Word*, Glasgow, quoted his articles from his *Herald of the Revolt* and other extracts from different contemporary newspapers of Europe concerning Savarkar's Case at the Hague in the special Savarkar issue of *The Word* in April 1947.

through the efforts of Pandit Shyamji that Professor F. M. Zandrine, officer of Public Instruction and a leading member of the executive council of the Federation of the Italian press promised Monsieur Pierre Khorat, the biographer of Savarkar, and Pandit Shyamji that the Italian Republican Party and especially the Parliamentary group would agitate for the release of Savarkar and accordingly in October 1912, the Republican Party of Italy resolved in its meeting at Rome to commence the agitation.[1]

Thus Savarkar's was the greatest historical trial the world has ever seen. The trial flashed India's aspirations on the front pages of world press. India's manhood and valour were indelibly imprinted on the pages of world history. The trial also left an imprint of Savarkar's personality on the International Law and stamped on Marseilles the footprints of a champion who heroically strove for the deliverance of a suppressed nation. India was discussed for the first time in international politics. Its impact was so great that its righteous pressure hastened the fall of the Premier of France, M. Briand! Such was the magnitude, such was the deathless blow that Savarkar struck individually, nationally and internationally upon the British Empire!

In his introduction to Sri Ranade's biography of Savarkar the late Sri N. C. Kelkar states: "The British Government boasts of having bestowed on India a seat in the League of Nations after the great war; but it was already snatched and confirmed for India by Savarkar, when he leapt from the port-hole of the ship into the sea at Marseilles, and standing on the soil of France challenged the nations of the world 'Speak out gentlemen, speak out' in the name of International Law!"

IV

"Did you recognise me? The garments are different. I am the same man. This prison dress also satisfies the basic human want namely protection from cold. Providence willing, we may meet again. If the affairs of life ever tempt you, think for a while! If life means giving birth and rearing

[1] Indulal Yajnik, *Shyamaji Krishnavarma*, pp. 304-5.

young ones, crows and sparrows also do the same in their nests. But if you take a broader view of life, you will agree that we have lived like men. We have extinguished the fire in our kitchen so that some day the smoke of gold may come out of thousands of homes."

It is the great art of life to forget one's own petty self, serve others and seek their good. He is a Great Man who follows his path with invincible resolution, who resists temptation both from within and from without; who bears the heavy burdens cheerfully and who is calm in storms and fearless under frowns.

Mark the self-denial and self-control in the aforesaid piece of advice. Standing on the threshold of eternity, a young man, who had been struck with a thunderbolt, was heroically consoling his young wife. It was Savarkar, the hero of Indian Independence. Government was kind enough to permit his wife to interview him in the Dongri Jail, Bombay, in the presence of a Jail Officer before he departed for the Andamans. His wife's grief was indescribable. Her soul was wrung with agony. With the sublime courage of a *Sati* she saw her rosy life put into a yawning grave. A sad inquiry dwelt in her gaze and wavered on her lip. She had already lost her baby son when her husband was in London. Saintly, heroic, she stood speechless. Crushed with the heavy chains and overflowed with feelings, Savarkar thus interpreted the grandeur and gravity of the fate that had befallen her! There was no time for righteous sighs or sobs. The time for interview ended. While parting Savarkar's brother-in-law who was also present there entreated him to recite every morning a certain Mantra, and the scene vanished like a dream.

A week or so before this interview Savarkar was informed in the Dongri Jail that the verdict of the International Court at the Hague had gone against him and that the fifty years' sentence now stood confirmed. He took off his civil dress and gazed at the jail garments and the ticket to be borne on chest, thinking that the dress he was putting on would either leave him in 1960 or his corpse would come out with it. His property was confiscated and even his books and dress were put to auction. His spectacles were returned to him as a favour. Such complete sacrifice in the cause of freedom was made

hardly by any other man throughout India's struggle for freedom. Someone sarcastically murmured, "The kind Government will release you in 1960." With a smile Savarkar replied, "Death is more kind. If it delivers me earlier?" Savarkar laughed consciously, the fool freely.

In order to bring the inhuman life sentence for half-a-century under the pale of human laws, Savarkar appealed to Government that the two transportations inflicted upon him should run concurrently. For, a man has but one life. How can he have two life sentences then? But his application was rejected. The officer who conveyed this decision to him said with mixed feelings of humour and sympathy that the Government desired him to undergo the sentence for the next life also during this lifetime. Savarkar then exclaimed: "Then the good thing about this is that the Government has at least rejected the Christian belief in resurrection and accepted the Hindu doctrine of re-birth! This is not a small gain!"

The furnace of tribulations was lit. The first task that was assigned to Savarkar was the chopping of cocoanut shells. He writhed with pain. But his mind took a philosophical turn and interpreted the chopping of the shells as the chopping of the fragments out of the elements of life and twisting them into one whole. "In its process, the compound of life develops to its full size and again dissolves into many fragments returning to the original elements from which it emanates."

Ordinarily the very idea of the terrific sentence for half-a-century would have crushed even the stoutest heart. But it was Savarkar's motto that enabled him to bear heroically the colossal shock! His motto was: "Don't be too much hopeful of success. Be always prepared for the worst possible reverses! For those who are born in an age of despair and darkness must be prepared to face the grim struggle with the possibility of reverses, if they aspire for the dawn of a new era."

To cope with the titanic term of two transportations he thought out an equally august plan. In order to pay the debt of the Motherland and render service to humanity, he made up his mind to compose an epic, write it on the canvas of his mind and dedicate it to the Motherland through his would-be sons, if he was ever allowed to settle according to the jail

rules with his wife on the island, or in any other way. This was the bare minimum that he could do in his hopeless, helpless state. He had no pen, no paper, no light, no lamp.

Savarkar started in right earnest to compose his poetry. The first poem he composed was on Guru Govind Singh, the sire of martyrdom. According to Savarkar Great Men with great success shine like the golden domes of great palaces; but the foundation that holds the pillars and domes lies buried under the ground. Guru Govind Singh, who fell in a great cause dejected, betrayed and deserted, was more heroic and appealing than any other hero in the eyes of Savarkar who had also met with the Guru's fate!

Savarkar then composed another poem on the crucified Christ whose divine personage submitted himself to torture and sacrifice and showed considerable physical fortitude in going through the cruel ordeal for his divine mission. Although an advocate of the doctrine of 'protection of the good and destruction of the evil-doer,' he held in high reverence the glorious martyrdom of Jesus Christ.

Savarkar's heroism had thrilled both the hemispheres with his epic adventure. European countries hailed him as a martyr, but he now happened to read the Anglo-Indian papers who stigmatized him as a 'rascal'! Did not the predecessors of these pirates similarly describe in London papers Washington in 1780 and Napoleon in 1803?[1] But Savarkar took both the remarks in good humour. He equated the jeers with the tears, the rascality from the pen of pirates and pedlars with the glory of martyrdom, and found his individual worth unchanged. The man who stands upon his own conscience and character cares not for praise or censure. However, Savarkar said to himself that a public servant should be ever prepared both for applause and censure.

From the Dongri Jail Savarkar was shifted to the Byculla Jail. Savarkar inquired of the sergeant in charge about the name of the jail. Being afraid to pass on the information the sergeant spelt the word Byculla and obliged Savarkar. So strict were the orders governing Savarkar's movements! Shortly afterwards, he was transferred to the Thana Jail. Normally warders, havaldars and petty officers cherished in

[1] Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan* (Introduction).

their heart of hearts a very high respect for him. They felt for his colossal ruin. One of the petty officers in the jail tauntingly remarked that Savarkar would be definitely set free in the year 1960. Savarkar silenced the twitters of the small fry when he asked him, " But is the British Rule itself going to last for fifty years more ? " The petty officer deified the leonine courage of Savarkar and was proud to be his slave. He did Savarkar a good turn. At dead of night he brought the first note of cheer from Narayanrao Savarkar, then a boy of seventeen, serving a sentence of six months in the Thana Jail. Commenting on his dark future Savarkar brushed over the dark canvas of the Andamans and wrote in reply that he hoped he would at least dedicate an epic to the Motherland during the term of his transportation.

The day of Savarkar's final departure for the Andamans soon dawned. Escorted by a squad of armed guards, batches of convicts on transportation reached the Thana Jail from all corners of the Province. Some frightful, some fearless, some tearful, some helpless, some reckless and some repentant, they were specimens of heartless murderers, meanest brutes, daring cutthroats and criminals of every description. But this strange type of humanity conceived a sort of awe and reverence for Savarkar, the Barrister convict. As a mark of goodness and respect they even went to bed rather early to enable the Barrister Babu to have a sound sleep. Their attitude was natural. For it is a notable fact that convicts and prisoners have always a high regard for a barrister. They know he is a man who shelters their crimes and sins under the shield of his intelligence or shatters the web of the villainy of those devils !

The march to the Andamans began. With a kurta, a small pot, an iron plate in one hand, blanket and a mattress under one armpit, Savarkar walked with his hand roped to that of a European officer. Seeing the special care taken by the officers of Savarkar, the convicts said with a proud note that the Government feared him ! In spite of the utmost secrecy observed, the news of Savarkar's departure leaked out and anxious faces were on the lookout in the streets of Thana for

a glimpse of the world-famous Indian patriot. At the Thana station Europeans took their ladies upon their shoulders to enable them to catch a glimpse of the distinguished prisoner! Savarkar, in handcuffs and irons, was seated in a special compartment and his hand was tied to that of a stout officer. And the train steamed out for Madras.

One officer, travelling in the same train, took a look at Savarkar at every halt. At last, at Madras he came up to Savarkar to bid him adieu. In a moving tone he said: "Good-bye friend, I hope you will be released in December at the time of the Delhi Durbar." Savarkar thanked him for his good wishes and said: "I don't think so. Our blows on the Government are quite fresh. They will not be forgotten so soon." "All the same," the Officer continued: "I will never forget this your dignified courage." It was a wrong impression prevailing among the Britishers that Savarkar was ungentlemanly, insolent and a dangerous man. They imagined that the presence of a Briton infuriated him. Savarkar, however, corrected their wrong notion with his gentle speeches. He said he never hated anybody simply because he was an Englishman or a Mohammedan. He returned smile for smile, thanks for good wishes and scorn for scorn!!

On reaching Madras Savarkar was taken to a steamer in a small special boat, which was well guarded. While in the boat, one officer tried to pump out some information from him concerning the assassination of Mr. Ashe, the Collector of Tinnevelly. Savarkar had come to know about it in the Thana Jail. But the officer wanted him to comment or criticise his statements. So he said: "In the province of Madras there are no thoughtless youths and so it is all quiet here." Savarkar with an implied smile asked him whether he was sure about the statement he made. And the officer understood it all!

On June 27, 1911, Savarkar was lodged in the steamer the S.S. MAHARAJAH. He was put on the lower dark deck in the iron cages meant for the convicts. Would he ever again see his Motherland or die the fate of the Russian exiles in Siberia,

thought Savarkar to himself. But his thoughts were interrupted. The engine roared. The steamer whistled! His voyage to the Devil's Island began. A terrific shock came to him. For his was the fate of a defeated Washington! Surrounded by the shabby and vile, wild and wicked men, fed on loathsome food, lying beside a cask used as water closet, he was overwhelmed by a feeling of nausea. He was stifled and only the philosophical bent of his mind came to his rescue. It said, "It is nothing. Food turns into stool and stool into manure and manure into food again. Then the food and stool are in reality not dissimilar." However, on application, the kind medical officer gave him the advantage of a ventilation hole to breathe more freely without worsening the malignant ashtma he had contracted in London.

For a while even the invincible mind of Savarkar was overwhelmed with a feeling of despair, sorrow and separation. A human heart after all! His mind took flight from the limited 'I' to the unlimited universe and the elements! He looked at the endless stretches of seas. He wondered at the fate of man when compared with the infinite vastness of the oceans and the universe. He said to himself: "Man has been dreaming of a good future ever since the dawn of the Vedas. And a dream is nothing but a flash of light in the pitchy darkness of the present." He exclaimed that it would be the greatest day in the history of mankind when the sun would witness the millennium and the real Golden Age where man loved his brother and gave up lust. Absorbed in such exalted thoughts, Savarkar came to the end of the journey.

It was the morning of July 4, 1911. A shimmer of golden sun was shaking through the trees and was giving life and hope to the denizens in the dreaded Indian Bastille, the Andamans! The steamer had anchored at Port Blair, the capital of the Andamans. The terrific jaws of the jail opened. The steamer was the threshold of life and death. One crossed it, and stepped into the yawning deathland. As they crossed the gate of the jail, the convicts quailed with their blankets overhead and plates in their hands. Savarkar was absorbed in great thoughts while going his way to the jail. With the ambition of a patriot, the vision of a poet and the foresight

of a prophet, he was engrossed in assessing the importance of the Andamans. Given proper opportunities of development, he murmured to himself, these islands could be the outposts of Free Hindusthan replacing Singapore which was so by accident. They would be the gateway of India on the East. If a strong naval base were built there, he thought, no enemy could strike at the Eastern coast of India! And how prophetic! The islands have become important naval bases during the present decade.

CHAPTER VI

The Indian Bastille

I

With a blanket on his head and a platter in one hand, Savarkar stood in chains before the ferocious lofty gates decorated with all kinds of chains, hand-cuffs, fetters, guns and bayonets. The gate creaked! Someone whispered that Mr. Barrie was coming on. Savarkar was preoccupied and was not conscious of Barrie's arrival. A voice roared, "Leave him. He is not a tiger!" The harsh voice waked Savarkar up. Turning to Savarkar the jailer opened conversation with him.

BARRIE : Are you the same man that tried to escape at Marseilles ?

SAVARKAR : Yes, why ?

BARRIE : Why did you do it ?

SAVARKAR : For some reasons. One of them was to free myself from these hardships.

BARRIE : But you fell into them of your own accord, is it not ?

SAVARKAR : True. I threw myself into them. Just so, I thought it my duty to escape from all these tribulations.

BARRIE : To tell the truth, I am not an Englishman. I am an Irishman.

SAVARKAR : May be. Had you been an Englishman, it would have mattered little. I would not hate you because you were an Englishman. I have spent the best part of my youth in England and I am a warm admirer of many virtues of Englishmen.

BARRIE : But the point is that I was an Irish revolutionary and fought for the independence of Ireland. Now I see the futility of it. Hence as a friend I may tell you that you are still young and I am advanced in age. . . .

SAVARKAR (*cutting him short*) : And don't you think that perhaps that may be the reason of the change that has

come over you? Not increasing wisdom but dwindling energy!

BARRIE (*scandalized*): You see, you are a barrister and I am a mere jailer. Don't discard my advice. Murders are murders and they will never bring independence.

SAVARKAR: Quite so; but why don't you try your advice on the Sinn Feiners? And who told you that I was a party to violence?

BARRIE (*suddenly assuming his official tone*): What I talked is against the rules. It pained me to see a youth of your great learning and fame among these criminals. I have nothing to do with your past. Mind well you are to abide by the rules. Their breach will bring on its penalty. One thing more. I may inform you that any attempt on your part at escaping from this island will be a feast to cannibals.

SAVARKAR: I know Port Blair is not Marseilles!

And so ended the first passage at arms between Mr. Barrie and Savarkar.

This Barrie had attained a marvellous notoriety among the criminals and political prisoners of India. Violent, ferocious, and stupid, he was a pot-bellied, bulky, red-skinned fellow with round staring eyes, fierce moustache, flat nose, short neck and carried a big staff in his hand. No other mediocre official ever lived long in the memory of the prisoners in the Andamans as Barrie did for the atrocities he perpetrated in his official capacity as the jailer of the Indian Bastille. Half-illiterate, full-blown coward, he lustily loved authority for which he fawned on his superiors and with which he tyrannised the convicts. Ignorant of intellectual pursuits his pastime was cruelty. His manner and tone expressed instinctive hatred for political prisoners. He loved self-praise immensely and sometimes displayed his learning which of course consisted of a few lines of poetry and some extracts to evoke a good remark from Savarkar. His poor wife and educated daughter often emptied the vials of his villainy and the Christmas days reminded the Christian jailer at least not to return evil for good!

Savarkar fearlessly entered the ferocious jaws of the Deathland as the early Christian martyrs faced the lions in

the Coliseum of the Romans. He started his life in the Andamans with a salt-water bath which began and ended with the brays of the Jamadar. Then he was locked in a cell on the third floor of the yard No. 7 of the Cellular Jail. The whole floor of yard No. 7 was vacated for him. The most wicked and vicious Pathans drilled in the methods of torturous jail administration were posted to guard his cell. It had been a part of the policy of the British bureaucracy to utilize whenever possible the fanatic Muslim mind against the Hindu forces and fighters. At every major crisis, at every decisive event, they gave full reins to their instinctive anti-Hindu bent of mind to frustrate the plans of the Hindu leaders or torture the Hindu agitators. History is replete with such instances.

It is the characteristic of a great life that it is ever full of duties and sacrifices. The soul that suffers gets stronger and sober. The soul of a Great Man never stands still. For Great Men are the heart of humanity. Their work never ceases for a single second until the day of death. The proverbs that no pains, no gains and no gall, no glory are undying. After a deed of deathless virtue, Savarkar was also thrown into the furnace of tribulations. The more the gold burns, the brighter it shines, and greater the number of clouds, the more dazzling is the splendour of the sun when he breaks forth.

Love of one's own country or humanity, if from within, is sublime and enduring. Patriotism or service of humanity, if from without, fades and withers. The former originates from a devotion to human progress or a belief in the sanctity of human life. The latter springs from immoral and foul personal ambition. Courage and spirit of self-sacrifice perpetuate true love, and self and pelf scandalize the untrue love. Savarkar belongs to the first heroic line of selfless patriots who belong not to one particular country but to the whole world. Savarkar was a pioneer in this line, and pioneers idealize the real and the successors realize the ideal.

Savarkar's arrival deeply stirred the whole of the Andamans. There was a feeling of change, freshness and life in the Andamans. To have a talk or a look at Savarkar, the world-famous revolutionary leader, visits of foreigners and

guests became a common feature in the Andamans. Ocean-going steamers, warships, mercantile ships would sojourn to give leisure to their men of authority or fame to have a talk with the illustrious Indian prisoner. They even humbly cajoled Mr. Barrie for permitting them to have a look at Savarkar. Next morning after Savarkar's arrival the Pathan warder announced the coming of Mr. Barrie. Barrie appeared with his usual staff in hand, accompanied by a guest. He opened the conversation with a reference to 1857.

Barrie being struck dumb on all points his guest interfered, and said to Savarkar: "But don't you condemn the self-centred rebels like Nana and Tatya Tope?" "Condemn? You see, I am a prisoner. I can't freely discuss these points here. If you stop me in the middle and try to lower the prestige and honour of my nation, it will be a sheer act of cowardice," replied Savarkar with a distinct note in his voice. Barrie granted Savarkar's request and allowed him to discuss freely. "I know," said Savarkar, "You are feeling the embers. This is a discussion on vital points in history and I will do it freely at any cost. It is sheer cowardice to bear silently vile attacks on one's national honour." He proceeded, "The Government had appointed a committee to investigate the so-called atrocities of this nature. It pronounced its verdict 'that those descriptions were baseless' and were invented by the wily brains of the British soldiers." The flame of righteous pride in Savarkar's heart was fanned. The hero was justifying the deeds of heroes. With a rise in his voice he said, "You describe Nana Sahib and Tatya Tope as self-seekers. For, Nana wanted to be king and Tatya wanted to attain glory. But is it not also true that Victor Emmanuel wanted to be King, Washington had an eye to the presidentship and Garibaldi craved for greatness? The fact is that they all fought for their national independence. None should decry them. And as for the massacres at Cawnpore, they were an answer to the terrible atrocities and the wholesale burning of villages committed by the British troops approaching Cawnpore." Barrie's guest was silenced. The conversation ended.

Before Savarkar's arrival the revolutionaries of Maniktola case, Savarkar's brother Babarao with Wamanrao Joshi, some

editors from Allahabad and some other political prisoners were rotting in the cellular jail of the Andamans. Out of the first group three had received sentences for life transportation for having waged war against the King Emperor and others were short-termed prisoners. Defeated valiant fighters of '1857' were the first and foremost champions to face the hellish fire of the Andamans. Stricken in age, one of the surviving warriors of '1857' congratulated Savarkar on his having continued the War of Independence. After the heroes of '1857' came the fighters of Wasudeo Balwant. Thus the sacrificial fire was kept burning from 1857 to 1910 in the Andamans and continued to do so by patriots and martyrs who were transported to the Andamans in subsequent years.

The coming of Savarkar brought better days for the political prisoners in particular and convicts in general. Hitherto no discrimination was made there between political and ordinary prisoners. Barrie and his fawning dogs ran amock. Barrie's word was law, his dogs' barkings were its arms. A man of little education, Barrie compensated for his inferiority complex by his harsh voice, bullying nature, crooked ways, and dull wits. His rough life had taken off the edge of his sense so much so that he utterly failed to distinguish between truth and falsehood. In his zest to rule the convicts with a heavy hand he proved to be worse than the English officials. Indeed the hot sand is more scorching than the sun itself. He called the revolutionaries bombthrowers, damned rascals and put the letter 'D' around their neck describing them as "dangerous" characters! His attitude towards the ordinary convicts was lenient, but towards revolutionaries inexorably severe. He violently abused the prisoners in general and causelessly harassed them. Even with this sort of harassment, uptil now the political prisoners had failed in giving a united fight to curb the unjust rule of Barrie. Their condition was very miserable.

The revolutionaries had to undergo unbearable physical tortures. They were yoked to the oil-mill. And the working on the oil-mill demanded such hard labour that it squeezed the life out of even the hardened and seasoned convicts, and they trembled at its sight. The oil-mill was, therefore, aptly regarded as the friend of suicide. Prisoners had to turn its

handle horizontally for hours together without even a slight break. They had to take their meals and drink water, while the oil-mill was in motion lest the quota of the oil might fall far below the expectation. But even with such hard labour full measure of the required quota could never be fulfilled by even the strongest prisoner. Their hands bled, hearts ached, heads whirled. They fell in dead faints. When they revived, round and round they had to go again in excruciating agony. Prisoners were sent to water closets in a file of eight or ten and they had to rush out without finishing the natural functions at the whim of the warder or were dragged out in that state too. It was an offence to answer the call of nature except during the scheduled time of morning, noon and evening. If any political prisoner felt the necessity to do so at odd hours, he did it in his cell in the small pot or on the walls of his cell and bribed the scavenger with a pinch of tobacco to get it cleared or else he was punished for this unavoidable natural call by being put into standing-handcuffs from 6 a.m. to 10 a.m. and from 12 noon to 5 p.m. During these punishment hours if he could not check his natural calls, he would answer them in that hanging condition. Political prisoners were not given as much leisure or rest as is given even to the beasts of burden for answering nature's calls or other natural functions. Educated persons were used as beasts of burden and illiterate persons were given clerical work. Pathans, warders and petty officers gulped down the share of the prisoners' food and milk. What is more, the doctors followed the diagnosis of the jailer !

The right of writing letters home was deprived even if any prisoner broke the file at the time of meals, or talked with his neighbour. Prisoners were forced to take their meals in soaking rains or in the scorching sun. The duration of time for meals depended not on the clock, but on the crowing of the warder. None could ask for more food, nor eat less. If surplus was thrown away, the prisoner was made to bring it back and eat it up !

Sometimes the prisoners had to drink water with a squeez on their noses. So dirty was its smell. Some political prisoners were made to do odd jobs at the residence of the officers, to clean streets and to draw carts of the officers. To

relieve themselves from the insufferable hard labour prisoners ate some harmful herbs or took some other drastic medicine that brought on diarrhoea or vomits of blood or high fever. Some pretended stark madness covering their faces even with stools. Their last refuge was suicide, the sure guide, friend and saviour, a consummation devoutly to be wished! Thus it will be seen that cellular jail machine was more soulless and dreadful, more devilish and dehumanising than any other terrific jail machine under the sun of Bastille notoriety or the Fortress of Peter and Paul in Czarist Russia of evil name.

Writing about this prison life, Savarkar said: "Life in a jail for good, for evil, is a unique chance. Man can never go out of it exactly as he came in. He goes out far better or far worse. Either more angelic or more fiendish. Fortunately for me, my mind has so quickly adapted itself to the changes in circumstances. It seems so strange that a nature so restless and active, roaming over continents, should so quickly feel quite at home in a cell hardly a dozen feet in length. And yet one of the kindest gifts of Providence to Humanity is this plasticity, this adaptability of the human mind to the ever changing environments of life."[1] To become your own friend you must retire into your own inner self and cultivate the friendship of the conscience, the God in you. A *yogin* in action can exercise such a tremendous control over his senses. Savarkar had conquered his senses and acclimatized himself to the new change. His mind climbed the tower of human imagination and saw the vastness of the universe dissolving its identity into Him. "When early in the morning and late in the evening," he wrote from the cellular jail, "I try a bit of *Pranayam* and then pass insensibly into a sweet sound sleep —Oh how calm and quiet is that rest, so calm that when I get up in the morning, it is long before I can realize again that I am in a prison cell lying on a wooden plank. All the common aims and allurements of mankind having receded far, the conscience is perfectly pleased with itself with the conviction of having served under His Banner and served to some purpose. A calm, sweet equanimity is left with my soul and it lulls my mind in an intense peace."[2]

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 18.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 18.

Here is a lively description of the daily life in the Cellular jail in Savarkar's words. "I get up in the morning when the bell goes on at 5 a.m. At its sound I feel as if I had entered a higher college for a higher study. Then we do our work of rigour till 10 a.m. While my hands and feet are automatically doing the given task, my spirit avoiding all detection is out for a morning trip, and across the seas and oceans, over hills and dales, it roams sipping only pleasant things and things noble, like a bee among flowers. Then I compose some new lines. Then we dine and at 12 noon work again. From 4 p.m. comes rest, reading, etc. This is the usual round of life here." The master artist in Savarkar further described the vivid picture in a Voltarian satire. He added: "In a prison what happens on the first day, happens always, if nothing worse happens. In fact, it seems to be the essence of prison discipline to avoid all novelty, all change. Like specimens and curios in a museum, here we are each exactly in the same place and same position, belted and labelled with the same numbers with more or less dust about us. . . . We get up early, work hard, eat punctually at the same place and the same amount and kind of food prepared with the same matchless prison skill and medical care." He concluded: "Almost every night, I tell you, I break the jail and out by dale and down and by tower and town go on romping till I find some one of you—some one who somewhere had been held close to my bosom! Every night I do it but my beneficent jailers take no notice of it. You have only to wake up in the jail, that is all they say!"[1] Solitary monotony for twelve years in a cell! This is a clue to the introversion that clung to Savarkar in later life and made him disinclined to mix freely with people and personalities.

II

For the first fortnight Savarkar was closed in a solitary cell. Then he was given the work of chopping the barks of cocoanuts with a heavy wooden mallet. His hands bled, swelled, ached and the coir was blistered with blood. In order to frighten Savarkar into submissiveness, Barrie displayed the wrath of his power by reviling his co-sufferers in his presence.

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 39.

Barrie's one aim was to impress upon Savarkar that he was not a political prisoner, but an ordinary criminal. The jailer always tried to dishearten and frighten him by riveting his eyes to the ticket on his breast showing imprisonment for half a century. But with all his resourcefulness Barrie could not overpower or overawe Savarkar. His personality, his fame and his courage had outgrown the pale of Barrie's mind, men and power.

The case of other political prisoners was quite different. With sunken heads they bore humiliations and were mortally wounded in their feelings, when Barrie spurred them with loathing. Savarkar consoled his co-sufferers and breathed life into them. He cheered them. He said that though they were helpless in those days, yet a day would dawn when statues would be erected to their memory in the very jail. Future generations would make a pilgrimage to that place saying, "Here dwelt for years the patriots of our land, the flesh of our flesh, the spirit of our spirit that fell in the cause of freedom." He added that their sufferings, their wounds and their struggle would be fruitful in the end.

And thirty-two years later Netaji Subhas Bose of the Indian National Army hoisted over Port Blair the flag of independence on December 30, 1943, honoured the memory of the Indian revolutionaries by saluting the cellular jail and renamed Andamans as "Shaheed Island" in memory of the martyrs. The wheel of destiny had turned. In a press interview in November 1943, Netaji said: "Most of the political prisoners sentenced to penal servitude for conspiracies to overthrow the British Government,—and there have been hundreds of them,—were locked up in this Island. Like the Bastille in Paris, which was liberated first during the French Revolution, setting free political prisoners, the Andamans, where our patriots suffered much is the first to be liberated in India's fight for independence."[1] Savarkar's prophecy came true to a letter!

Subhas Bose was not a degenerated man to disparage the noblest sacrifice of the heroes of the Andamans. He knew that their prison life had only one class. That was facing death in every form at every moment. Not fruits but frowns,

[1] *Jai Hind*, published by Amritlal Prabhashankar, p. 74.

not cosy beds but wooden planks galled them. There they rolled in dark, damp, dirty, dingy cells. Every hour of theirs they passed in moving, mournful and moanful misery. Their food was half-cooked, soiled, filled with drops of sweat and often seasoned with pieces of reptiles or white dead worms. They toiled like horses and worked as bullocks! The climate sapped their vitality and life. Under the strain and stress of extreme physical rigours some of them showed signs of mental aberration and collapsed into insanity. They underwent these poignant trials for the very liberation of their Motherland. Had they worked safely enough to save their skin, had they loved a life of peace, pelf and position, they would have attained it easily for some of them were sufficiently rich or eminently gifted with rich brains. Subhas knew this and so he honoured them first.

In the middle of August 1911, Savarkar was yoked to the oil-mill, the hardest task, the greatest test and the severest pain the cellular life witnessed. The jail superintendent called Savarkar and said he would not give him that work again if he did it for two weeks. This severest turn of dealing with prisoners was a result of the strong remarks of an officer from Calcutta, the then Capital of the Government of India, to the effect that the prisoners in the Andamans were treated considerately. That visit gave a handle to Barrie to play havoc in the Andamans. Barrie deliberately reminded Savarkar of the fifty years' rigorous sentence and promised him help if he did not refuse to do the work. Heartless as he was, he unkindly remarked that Savarkar was promoted from Coir to *Kolu*—the oil-mill! This promotion or rise in the status, curiously enough, was upheld by the Bombay University which informed Savarkar only a day before he was harnessed to the oil-mill that his B.A. degree was cancelled. There was nothing strange that a University in a slave country should kill its child for its own existence.

As for the remembrance of 50 years' imprisonment Savarkar was used to it now, as an artillery soldier is used to the terrific booming.

The barrister thus began to move around the oil-mill like a bullock. His body ached, muscles writhed with pain, stomach turned and mouth parched, for the prisoner was not

even given more than a certain quantity of water. Moved by the sight, some political prisoners helped him secretly. There was even healthy rivalry among them for washing his clothes secretly. Savarkar was overwhelmed with their feelings. In turn he would sometimes wash their clothes without their knowledge and they sincerely entreated him not to do so.

Savarkar felt that his great powers that would have enriched the destiny of the country were wasting away. Disgustful of dying a slow, painful death, and that too unobserved, his mind drove him to the thought of suicide. In such a state suicide becomes a deed of self-respect! For a while he was fascinated with the idea and greedily looked to the upper side of the window of the cell from where many mounted on to heaven by means of rags tightened to their necks! Dusty and deadly fatigued, one day he reeled against the wall surrounding the oil-mill and fell in a faint. When he revived, things around him became gradually visible and intelligible to him one by one; he knew by and by who and where he was, and he picked himself up with great effort for work! For some time mind routed reason. Defeated reason again joined battle. It said, "What an ego! You never craved for name, fame and glory. You wished to suffer most for humanity. You attained it. What of your abilities and intelligence! There was a time when there were no Himalayas; there will be a time when they will not be there. Even the sun in the universe has an unsteady position. He will be pricked one day like a bubble and still the universe will go on. Therefore, if you want to die, do not die a cowardly death by suicide, but die valiantly."[1] Reason inspired courage into the mind and it plumed its feathers, soaring, and singing again.

The first secret note Savarkar got was from Hotilal Varma. The note dashed against the inside wall of the cell with a stone. The sound occasioned a great hubub. Warders from below ran upstairs and searched Savarkar and his cell, but in vain. When they were gone, he took it out from the innermost delicate part of the body and read it! In it Hotilalji had informed Savarkar that there was a division among the Bengali revolutionaries. It was a fact that some

[1] Savarkar, *Mazi Janmathep*, p. 131.

of them could not stand the sufferings and turned informants and lackeys. In others the conscience was not yet dead. They told their colleagues to put an end to their lives since life had been made impossible for them due to severe agonies. Savarkar felt sympathy for the past services and sacrifices of those heroic souls who had turned informants. Their tortured body became untrue to their faith and trampled upon the soul. Yet, he held that none had the right to criticise them but those who had suffered more than they. Those who decided to live under any circumstances avoided tortures by being lackeys and spies of Barrie. Those who despised a life of dishonour preferred death to living as traitors to the cause and the country. There were few who considered life worth living till it did not go against their principles.

III

Savarkar resolved to resort to agitation within the four corners of law in the Andamans to secure the privileges of political prisoners for his comrades and to compel the jail authorities to give physical and cultural amenities to political prisoners. With that aim in view he first devoted his mind to the education of the political prisoners. The revolutionaries were all youths. Some of them had chosen this life owing to their daring, noble and selfless disposition. Some of them had vague and hazy notions about the fundamental principles of the revolutionary struggle, its aims and its methods. Savarkar decided to drill and steel them in those fundamentals which gave them a solid base of knowledge of Political science, of Economics, and of Constitutional Law. The contact began at the oil-mill, or at the work of chopping the bark. Besides, education was imparted through the top of the windows and holes at the bottom of the walls of the cells; on the occasion of transfer of cells, going to and coming from the jail office and through a secret service of private notes.

This movement needed books. And books were a red rag to Barrie. On Sundays prisoners got books. Every evening they also got books, but each his own. Exchange of books was dealt with seriously. For this breach of discipline offenders would hang in hand-cuffs for a period of four days.

The chief obstacle in the way was Barrie's terrible ignorance and his loathing for books. To his ignorant mind books containing words like "nation," "country" "patriotism", drove men to acts of violence. And books on theosophy, he held, made them mad! Barrie, perhaps, forgave a prisoner for any trifling offence or a glaring breach, but never did he tolerate the sight of a book or a slate! Savarkar cheered his co-sufferers by telling them the stories of heroes from the mythology and history. In jail not a scrap of paper was tolerated. A tiny piece of lead hidden in hair or in the cavity of mouth would amount to a crime and would bring severe punishment. The cell of Savarkar was raided even twice or thrice a week during the first six or seven years. Illegible writing on the walls was considered a wilful damage to Government property.

The task of educating his co-prisoners was difficult. At the beginning even the educated prisoners treated this new move with scant respect and the illiterate fled from it. Pointing out the then confusion in New China due to want of constitutional experts, and the disorderliness in new Iran for want of economists and accountants, Savarkar impressed upon the revolutionaries that for conducting a Government efficiently they should also have Gokhales, Dutts or Sir Madhavraos among them having mastery over the knowledge of Constitutional Law, Science of Economics and Politics. In their present lot they could do nothing better than store this knowledge in order to equip themselves better for the future work, struggle and action, as some of them were short-termed prisoners and would soon be free. For Savarkar held that knowledge without action was lame and action without knowledge was blind. To him knowledge that did not issue in any tangible action was like a tree without fruit!

Savarkar fought out the problem of books despite the opposition of Barrie and ultimately secured the Superintendent's permission to store books. It was mutually arranged that every prisoner should ask his relative to send books at a particular time so that every month they received a parcel of new books. Still Barrie would have his say. He blackened some pages or tore away those pages of the books which he considered objectionable. The idea of a library appealed to

European officers also and they deposited their books in the library. Some prisoners were entrusted with the work of maintaining the library. At first the criminals avoided Bade Babu's (as Savarkar was called by them) literacy campaign. Soon some of them saw its utility and joined ; others who fled from him were sometimes awarded scholarships, in the currency of the Andamans, a pinch of tobacco, and were won over. The effect was visible. Many completed some course and were appointed Munshis—clerks. Criminals abated in their fury and became more docile. They read religious books with great devotion. Many learnt to read papers and when they could do so their joy knew no bounds !

With the growth of the literacy movement the library also began to grow. It swelled with complete works of Spencer, Shakespeare, Mill, Vivekananda, Ramkrishna ; great works of Gibbon, Emerson, Macaulay, Carlyle, Tolstoy, Nietszche, Rousseau, Voltaire and Tagore. The Library also contained Plato's *Republic*, Thomas Moor's *Utopia*, Rousseau's *Contract*, Wilson's *State*, works of Great Mahratta and Bengali Poets ; Bengali, Hindi, Marathi Weeklies and Monthlies ; Modern Review and Indian Review. It was in the Andamans that Savarkar drank deep at the fountain of Bengali literature. Though he had composed a poem on the Nobel Prizeman, Rabindranath Tagore, he was of opinion that Bankimchandra, Roy and Madhusudan were equally great in sweep, imagination and rhythm.

But the books that appealed to him most were *Yogavashistha* and the *Imitation of Christ* by Thomas A Kempis. The spell of the latter was so irresistible that he gladly received it as a gift from a European officer on his return journey from the Indian Bastille. The energy and patience of Savarkar were inexhaustible ! Savarkar taught the criminals and his colleagues with the endurance, insistence and love of a loving teacher. To some of the dull criminals he had to give the alphabetic lesson for over twenty times before his perseverance could bear fruit. The criminals read religious books and newspapers with great interest. Everyone was now anxious to secure news about Hindusthan and making propaganda for her cause ! At the time of Savarkar's departure the library contained about 2,000 books. The object of the

campaign was fulfilled. The cent per cent illiteracy amongst the convicts was changed into sixty per cent literacy when Savarkar left the Andamans.

But none of his propagandistic moves aroused so vigorous an opposition and such widespread misunderstanding as did his great efforts for investing Hindi with the importance of the Lingua Franca of India. That Hindi should be the Lingua Franca of India was one of the important creeds of the Abhinava Bharat. The Abhinava Bharat had declared this times without number. Savarkar struggled hard to imprint upon the minds of his colleagues and co-prisoners the importance of Hindi. Struggle, storm, sparks, conviction and spell are the characteristics of Savarkarian movements. They are the fate of every pioneer, precursor and prophet. Savarkar appealed to his colleagues to call for books on Hindi. He taught them Hindi. He insisted that every prisoner should learn his main provincial language and Hindi as the national language. Madrasis and Bengalis were averse to it and adversely criticised Savarkar's stand. They even suspected that Savarkar wanted to kill their mother-tongues under the guise of a National Language. If somebody wished to bestow gifts in memory of the celebration of any good day or event, Savarkar persuaded him to give Hindi books. Savarkar answered his critics that he never persuaded any one to purchase Marathi books and asked them whether he wanted to kill Marathi also. Not less violent was the opposition from the British Officers. They knew Urdu and therefore they opposed the introduction of Hindi and Nagari and more so because it was a cause propagated by Savarkar. Hence they feared that either it would enormously increase his influence or would develop into a menace in some respects! This latter suspicion was mooted and fomented by the Muslims in the Andamans too!

In this cause the Arya Samajists helped him, as Swami Dayananda, their prophet, was the first and foremost leader to champion the cause of Hindi with Nagari script, as the Lingua Franca of India. Dayananda wrote his books in Hindi. Savarkar's respect for Dayananda was high. He got the *Satyartha Prakash* read by his colleagues and co-prisoners. He regarded the great work of Dayananda as a fearless and

formidable exposition that teaches and implants the noble ideals of Hindu culture, elucidating the importance of Hindu religion as the national religion of Hindusthan. Savarkar explained to his colleagues how Hindi had been the national tongue, an all-India language of the *sadhus* and merchants, princes and pilgrims from Rameshwar to Badrinath, from Puri to Dwarka ever since the days of Prithviraj.

Before this the second language of the jail office of the Cellular Jail or the Andamans was Urdu and the posts of Munshis had been occupied by persons from Upper India who were educated in Urdu. Letters, reports and applications to and from the Andamans were written in Urdu ! After a long struggle Savarkar persuaded the prisoners to write their letters in the provincial languages or conveniently in Hindi and to write their complaints, answers, or applications in Hindi so that the necessity and urgency of Nagari-knowing Munshis should be felt increasingly. The effect was tremendous. Formerly ninety per cent of the letters from and to the Andamans were in Urdu, a few years after the arrival of Savarkar the tables were turned and the ratio was in the reverse order. Some distinguished prisoners from the Punjab, who had composed their poetry in Urdu, got themselves accustomed to the Nagari Hindi and re-wrote their poems in Hindi !

In the colony of free citizens this constant propaganda for Nagari and Hindi took root and the ceremonial invitation cards began to appear in Hindi. From the conversations of Hindus the similes and metaphors describing the Arabic environments disappeared by and by. It has been Savarkar's bold and constant stand for the last forty years that Urdu should be preserved for Muslims, but it should not be allowed to replace or dominate Hindi in any field on any account. The propaganda and importance of the *Lingua Franca* appealed even to the officers who were secretly tutored in Hindi. It was through Savarkar's efforts and pressure that a Girls' School was started in the colony but he could not annihilate the teaching of Urdu in Boys' Schools as his departure came off suddenly ! Savarkar held that if the importance and future of the Andamans was to be increased usefully in reference to the safety and predominance of Hindusthan and Hindu

culture, Hindi and Nagari should be made compulsory in the Andamans.

The significance of this farsighted move can now be imagined and appreciated. Long before any leader of prominence ever since the days of Dayananda dreamt of its importance or entered the field, Savarkar was the only outstanding Hindu leader who strove in right earnest from 1906 to invest Hindi with the power and prestige of the National Language. On the vital problems of nation building he has been ever outspoken, uncompromising and prophetic as none else could be. The Nagari Pracharini Sabha was, of course, toiling in the field, but slogans fail in the field, if guns are not in the forefront. It was after forty-three years since the days of the Abhinava Bharat's declaration that the nation accepted Hindi with the Devanagari script as the Lingua Franca of Free Hindusthan !

IV

In the meantime troubles were coming to a head in the Andamans. The boldest among the prisoners resolved to launch upon a strike to vindicate their rights. The strike was marked by many incidents. Calm, sturdy and of good family, one Punjabi revolutionary was yoked to the oil-mill. Having worked till 10 a.m. he took his bath and meals calmly regardless of the words of abuse poured by the petty officers to make him work. The situation grew rather intolerable. The potbellied jailer with the staff in his hand appeared on the scene. The prisoner told him that he was chewing his food scientifically. Barrie threatened him with punishment, but he did not yield.

Such rebellious prisoners were kept on rice-gruel, and in order to weaken the strength of their minds doses of quinine or some drastic purgative were forced down their throats. That tortured their physique and aggravated their agonies. Despite these insufferable tortures this valiant revolutionary did not yield. At last Barrie came to terms. After four days' regular work he was relieved of the hard labour. As a result of this strike, the political prisoners were sent outside for work in deference to their demands. There they did some

odd jobs, but one and all refused to draw carts of officers and re-asserted their dignity.

Savarkar's elder brother was one of the most unbending prisoners. The jailer and his dogs tried every method and measure to torture him. Unfortunately some maladies worsened the trouble. He was seized now and then with a splitting headache, typhoid and cholera, but not a drop of medicine was given to him. He groaned frightfully with pain. Still he was made to chop the shell of cocoanuts. In the closed cell he helplessly passed his watery motions upon the rubbish and threw it outside when the door opened. For such unavoidable breach he was often hung in hand-cuffs in a painful state, his bowels purging and his urine passing the while! What man has made of man! Yet this brave man of steel frame worked at the oil-mill with all his might and in spite of his agonies, but never did he yield to humiliation nor did he do a dishonourable act to purchase a sigh of relief. For good many days the two brothers were not allowed to have even a glimpse of each other. When Savarkar enquired of the officers about the severe illness of his elder brother he was told to speak for himself. They said rules forbade them to disclose his whereabouts to a prisoner or to speak about his health! In the end secret sympathies worked and Babarao caught sight of his brother. Seeing his younger brother after years, he burst out: "Tatya, how do you happen to be here?" That direct query pierced Savarkar's heart. He was about to speak, but the brothers were suddenly pulled asunder. Subsequently a secret note to his brother from Babarao lamented. "The belief that you were carrying on the fight for the liberation of our Motherland enlivened my heart and lightened my tortures. Who will carry on your work? Your gifts and powers will now go to waste." The reply from Savarkar went in a consolatory tone: "My abilities and powers have stood the grim test. The glory of it is that what I preached I practised and fell fighting in the forefront. It is also a righteous duty to suffer tortures rotting in the cell with curses from those for whom we fell. For the achievement of the final victory, these sighs, sufferings and sacrifices in the cells are as necessary as is the fighting with the blare of the trumpets of glory."

To alleviate the tortures and to blunt the edges of the cruel claws of the administration, the political prisoners headed by Savarkar, began to think out ways and means. It was necessary to bring pressure upon the administration from without. British officers who ruled in the land of Death depended upon each other for company and comforts. They played, they danced, they enjoyed themselves together and naturally their interests did not clash in the administration. Hence a complaint against one was never paid heed to by another! It was, therefore, necessary that the leaders in India should know something of those terrible tortures. But how to bell the cat was the question. At last Hotilalji Varma dared and did it. His secret letter to Surendranath Banerjee giving the details of the jail life in general reached the Bengal leader through secret channels. Surendranath published it in his *Bengali* under the signature of Hotilalji with the numbers of his cell and chawl! It was a veritable bombshell. On hearing this Barrie ran to the cells like a man scorched by embers. He roared at Hotilal: "Stand up at once. You are a rank rascal," said he in a voice of thunder. Barrie told Savarkar about the mischief of Hotilal and falsely added that the Press in which the Bengali was printed was confiscated.

Everybody in the Andamans was always anxious to get a scrap of news about the happenings in the Motherland beyond the ocean. New-comers were, therefore, always received with utmost cordiality for the sake of news. News also filtered and was circulated through many other channels. A brave son of a great leader of the Punjab serving a term in a prison in the Punjab wrote a letter to Savarkar on the back of the ticket of a convict. The fellow brought it to Savarkar undetected. Sources of foreign news were the rubbish papers at the water closets of the British officers, old soiled wrapping papers of pins, nails and other articles. Many prisoners lost their privilege of working outside the jail for bringing in pieces of newspapers but the news agency worked unabated. Political prisoners secretly shared their bread with those devoted and daring messengers. Barrie gaped and was dumbfounded to know the futility of suppressing news. He often told the superintendent that even if the devil was appointed jailer it would be impossible for him to stop news

going to those bomb-throwers. Sometimes on his night rounds Barrie heard messages transmitted by the political prisoners to one another from one end of the jail to the other through some peculiar sounds of the chains. If at all the illiterate warders suspected something, the political prisoners told the warders that they were muttering prayers in their mind to the tune of chains! This Andaman's wireless was introduced in Nagari by Babarao Savarkar.

With the same heartlessness Barrie once informed Savarkar that his friend Hardayal was due to come to the Andamans. After many secret anxious inquiries Savarkar learnt that Hardayal had, in fact, given a slip to the Government of U.S.A. Barrie also once told Savarkar that his brother Narayanrao was expected in the Andamans as a result of the bomb thrown at Lord Hardinge in Delhi! The word Savarkar was synonymous with sedition and sedition became synonymous with Savarkar! Even the Chief Commissioner told Savarkar that he had met Babu Surendranath Banerjee on board the steamer and the latter had inquired after the health of Savarkar. Savarkar had nothing but high regard for Surendranath Banerjee. He paid tributes to the uncrowned king of Bengal for the word of encouragement he sent through a German Military Officer-prisoner and the sympathy and help he rendered to the patriots in the cellular jail.

In 1911 there were rumours afloat in the Andamans that all political prisoners were to be released in memory of the Delhi Durbar. Expectations became rife; rumours rained. Though sceptical of his release, a wave of sensation passed through Savarkar's body when he heard everyone saying, "Barrister Babu, you are to be released." The day dawned. Excepting Savarkar and a Bengali political prisoner all were given remission of a month per year. All that Savarkar got was potato-rice. And the cells were again enveloped in utter disappointment.

At times when in good humour Barrie would of himself break shocking news to Savarkar. One day in 1915 Barrie told Savarkar that G. K. Gokhale was dead. Savarkar paid glowing tributes to the memory of the great patriot. Hearing the glowing tributes paid by Savarkar to the selfless service

and profound patriotism of Gokhale, Barrie was taken aback and he noted in his diary that though the Maharashtrians differed outwardly they were one at heart! Hardayalji had the same experience about Mahratta leaders.

Savarkar was very anxious to know if India had made any progress with the royal event. He learnt that the settled fact was unsettled; the partition of Bengal was annulled. Savarkar was happy and said to his colleagues: "Once a man is convinced that quinine roots out Malaria, he will take it whenever he gets an attack of Malaria." The capital of India was about to be transferred to Delhi as foretold by Savarkar, but he said that from the standpoint of history, culture, politics and geography, Ujjain should be the proper place for the capital of India. December 23, 1912, was the day for the transfer of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The state entry of Lord Hardinge, the Governor-General of India, in oriental splendour, was greeted with a terrific bomb at the famous Chandni Chowk. Lord Hardinge was wounded while riding in the silver Howdah upon an elephant. The man behind Hardinge who held the state umbrella was killed. Hardinge fainted from loss of blood and his wounds took some months to heal. It seemed that the royal proclamation could not pacify the revolutionaries. They were grappling as before with the British power for the liberation of the Motherland.

Among the most heroic sufferers in the Andamans that put up a brave fight to undermine the rigid and rapacious jail administration of the Cellular Jail and to break the spell of terror was one Indu Bhushan Roy. Stout, sturdy and spirited, he was sentenced to transportation for 10 years in the Maniktola case. Indu Bhushan soon fell ill and was thrown into his cell. And instead of giving medicine, Barrie yoked him to the oil-mill. With deadly pale face, Indu walked with great effort and great pain. Savarkar tried to console him by bringing his own severest lot to his attention and cheered him up. But to no purpose. Next morning Indu Bhushan was a stiff block, his tongue drawn out, his legs hanging loosely. Barrie hushed up the note which Indu had suspended on his chest and stated that Indu's death was the outcome of insanity. Savarkar challenged this statement and persisted in

telling Barrie that it was an outcome of the extreme physical hardships of jail life. Upendranath Banerjee of Alipore case was also harnessed to the oil-mill. His whole frame ached and his mental condition grew so much pitiable that a sympathetic word would move him to tears. Ullaskar Dutt of Alipore case whom the judge described as a noblest youth was a witty, fearless and good-hearted type of humanity. When he was tortured with electric shocks, Ullaskar moaned, raved and pitieously groaned. He was then transferred to the mental hospital and thence to Madras and was afterwards released.

After the tragedy of Ullaskar, Barrie asked Savarkar when he would go mad. Savarkar replied angrily, "Perhaps after *you* go mad!" At this juncture a note from Savarkar discussing the policy of an immediate strike was seized and Savarkar was punished by putting him in standing hand-cuffs. Crook as he was, Barrie managed to get Savarkar's note in *Modi* read by a Bengali as if it were written in Bengali! Savarkar appealed to the Superintendent to look into the truth and see whether the chit was in Bengali. The truth came out and Barrie was severely reprimanded. The second time Savarkar was hung in hand-cuffs was for his note asking somebody to bring news. Barrie unkindly joked with Savarkar in standing hand-cuffs, "What is this about?" "Postage!" replied Savarkar. "It has rather cost you much," said Barrie. Savarkar answered back pungently, "Not at all! In your case you have to pay subscription for newspapers plus postage. We get news free of subscription. Only this sort of postage we have to pay half-yearly or so!"

The third in the line of martyrs was Nani Gopal, a Bengali revolutionary of good family. As he was yoked to the oil-mill, he gave up all work, observed silence, abandoned jail apparel, and gave up food. The Superintendent decided to flog him. Savarkar warned Barrie that if they shed his blood the revolutionaries would definitely retaliate. Meantime, thrilling news about Indu Bhushan and Ullaskar appeared in the Indian press. The officers were alarmed. Consequently there was a sudden round-up in the Andamans. Rumours had it that the revolutionaries were planning to bomb the Cellular Jail! Strict measures were adopted. Thorough search was taken in every cell and in the settlement also.

Free people and prisoners alike were harassed. Bar-fetters, hand-cuffs, standing hand-cuffs, penal diet, solitary confinement and all sorts of punishments were imposed. Savarkar was told that he would never be allowed to work outside, though according to rules he ought to have been released long ago from the Cellular Jail to settle on the island. It was certified that his conduct was exemplary, but his past was dangerous ! !

Barrie was now wild with rage. He ordered all political prisoners not to speak in English as he thought their talk in English raised them high in the eyes of the ordinary criminals. At once a rebel rose and said in Hindi that because the jailer asked questions in English they answered in English and added that political prisoners were not so much enamoured of English. He further retorted : "It is true that we have not become one with the English tongue and shamelessly enough forgotten our language. Look at our jailer, he is an Irishman, but does not know a word of his mother-tongue ! " Barrie was scandalized. In a fit of paroxysm he bragged out : "You Indians, you are our slaves." A bold voice shot back, "Your slaves ! What are you ? You are a child of a slave of the British Empire. We are slaves of the British Empire and not yours ! Moreover, we have been striving at the risk of our necks to overthrow the foreign yoke while you are calling that empire your own, the empire which has enslaved your Motherland and what is worse, you are living on the crumbs of loaf that are thrown before you ! " Upon this all the prisoners burst into shrieks of uncontrollable laughter to the great scandal of the jailer ! The order was changed immediately. He ordered the political prisoners not to speak again in Hindi !

The protests in the press, the questions in the Imperial Council, the growing volume of public opinion and the thrilling stories of the Cellular Jail brought pressure upon the Government of India and the Home Member, Sir Reginald Craddock, paid a visit to the Andamans in 1913. Some selected political prisoners were called for interview. A few were told that they deserved a more grievous fate. Others were told that their past was dangerous. The interview with Savarkar took a shrewd turn.

CRADDOCK : Savarkar, what a pitiable condition you have thrown yourself in. I have read your writings. If your intellectual powers had worked in the proper direction, any highest post of authority in India would have been conferred upon you. But you chose this line !

SAVARKAR : But it is up to you now to save me these tribu*lations. I learn Gokhale's Bill* demanding compulsory education has come up for consideration in the Council. If such opportunities are offered to us, almost all from our fold will prefer peaceful methods.

CRADDOCK : How do you know that ? Do you also know the whereabouts of your comrades and lieutenants ?

SAVARKAR : How can I ? I am here in a solitary cell. But we know each other's views. It is a sin to follow the path of violence when it is possible to make progress in a peaceful way. Such were my views when we worked in the revolutionary camp. Such were theirs. Perhaps they may be thinking likewise.

CRADDOCK : Not at all ! They are still proclaiming the battle cry in your name in India and in America.

SAVARKAR : I know about it from you. How can I prevent them from using my name ?

CRADDOCK : We will consider the advisability if you are prepared to write to them about your present views.

SAVARKAR : Of course, I shall willingly do it. But that letter must be written by me independently, otherwise it will be of no use !

CRADDOCK : The letter must go through us !

SAVARKAR : Then it will mean to them that it was an extraction !

CRADDOCK : We can't allow it.

SAVARKAR : I can't help it.

CRADDOCK (*staring a bit*) : Well then, what are your grievances ?

Savarkar began to tell the tale of trials. The Chief Commissioner intervened. " But you all have conspired and acted dangerously. If Russians had ruled India, they would have transported you to Siberia or shot you dead." He added that political prisoners should be grateful to the British Government for having treated them so considerately.

SAVARKAR : In that case the Russians would not have disarmed us. Peoples of Siberia can be generals. Had it been possible for us to bear arms, the story of the overthrow of the Mogul empire would have been repeated !

CRADDOCK : What if you had rebelled against the ancient Indian Kings. They would have trampled you under the feet of elephants.

SAVARKAR : They would have ! In days gone by in England a man was also dragged along the street for committing theft and was beheaded. But it is not so now. The thing is that this advanced stage is the result of the efforts of both the camps. If rebels were trampled under elephant's feet, they also, when successful, used to behead a king like Charles I. Times are changed. Both camps have improved their methods ! It is a sign of progress. You frankly tell us that you are not guided by any rules and we will prepare ourselves for that also !

Craddock came and went. Yet, Nani Gopal had not taken food. Forty-five days had glided by. Some political prisoners went on a sympathetic fast and thus the third strike began. Savarkar awaited his home letter, but it was not handed over to him as Dr. Savarkar had written to him that Keir Hardie had compared Irish and Indian revolutionaries in his speech in Parliament and remarked that 'British Government had harshly crushed Savarkar.' Savarkar knew this through his secret source and then joined the strike. From the first he was averse to a hunger strike and wasting energy. But Nani Gopal's life was in danger. He, therefore, declined to take food and asked for an interview with Nani Gopal. Nani Gopal and Savarkar were allowed to meet. Nani Gopal broke his fast when he knew that Savarkar had gone on a sympathetic fast. Mirzakhan, the notorious pocket edition of Barrie, proudly told Savarkar that Nani was a brave disciple of Savarkar and his courage befitted a Pathan and not a Hindu ! Savarkar answered in a Savarkarian way. He said, "Had Nani been a Pathan he would have like a fawning dog licked the dust at the feet of Barrie ! The fact is that had all the Pathans been brave and all the Hindus not brave, your Pathan or Mogul Empire would not have been smashed by the Hindus ! "

The years rolled by and at last came the news that the Government of India had decided to bring back the termed convicts to Indian jails. Those undergoing life terms were to be released from jail to settle on the island, if their conduct was satisfactory. While in prison they were to be given better class food and clothes and after five years they were to be allowed to cook their own food with a little money to easen their life!

Thus pressure from without and struggle from within slackened the rigours and rigid rules of the Deathland!

CHAPTER VII

Genius Thrives in Jail

I

In his utter helplessness and colossal frustration of life Savarkar was striving superhumanly to wring some good out of it. A true ascetic and man of action as he was, he resolved to make the most of life and to make the best of it. Such men of supreme courage and indomitable will make appearance from age to age. Stone walls do not imprison them, nor do iron bars encage them. Their angelic souls rise above and soar. Their life is real. Earnestness is its breath. The grave is not its goal. Their souls are indestructible. A cruel thread of destiny was weaving and tightening round the neck of Savarkar. Despite the horrible and indescribable agonies, his genius throve in jail.

Ever since his childhood, when he was quite ignorant of what an epic was like, Savarkar had a mind to compose an epic on 'Panipat', but, being a poet of action, he could not find time for this great work. He seized this opportunity and almost achieved his goal. And this marvellous feat was performed in the dark Andamans where reading and writing was a crime. He had no paper, nor had he pencil. In prison life philosophy is the ultimate refuge of a troubled soul. And we know how all distinguished political prisoners of world fame wrote famous histories, autobiographies, works on philosophy and other kind of great works.

John Bunyan wrote his immortal *Pilgrim's Progress*, Thomas Moor wrote his *Utopia*, Sir Walter Raleigh, his *History of the world*, Tilak, his *Gita Rahasya*, Hitler, his *Mein Kampf*, and Nehru, his *Autobiography* and *Glimpses of World History*. Fortunately all these eminent men were supplied with writing and reading facilities. But Savarkar was the only eminent political prisoner of world fame who composed some ten thousand and odd lines of poetry of great imagination and of great thought, wrote them on the prison walls with thorns and

pebbles, learnt them by heart secretly, and astounded the imagination of the world, giving an ocular proof of how the *Vedas* have been handed down ever since the childhood of civilization ! Just imagine the unbending tenacity and undying will power of a young man undergoing a sentence for half-a-century, who, while hanging in handcuffs during the punishment hours of jail life, recited, revised and learnt by heart his poems. Add to this, his untiring energy and ingenuity in making the wild criminals and devotional colleagues learn some of those poems by heart. After their release they went to Savarkar's brother, Dr. N. D. Savarkar, and recited them dutifully and faithfully for reproduction.

Savarkar is a term synonymous with patriotism in the domain of Indian politics and poetry. The parent thought of his poetry is the worship of the Goddess of Freedom. He sings :—

We dedicated to thee our thoughts
Our speech, our eloquence to thee, Oh Mother !
My lyre sang of thee alone and
My pen wrote of thee alone, Oh Mother !

And

For thy sake death is life
Without thee life is death.

And

O Mother, who will dare insult thee in the world
We will give thee bath of his blood.

And

Even so this our Motherland craving the assistance
Of the Lord that she too be rescued from the crocodile
Clutches of Bondage enters our Garden, plucks
A fresh flower from the bough and offers
It at His feet in worship.

And

Deathless is the family that falls to a man,
For the emancipation of its Motherland,
Filling the skies with the fragrance of their sacrifice,
Made in the welfare of Man's rise.

Abject slavery and crushing foreign yoke are the source of his note. Glorious past is its inspiration. Patriotism is its song, Swaraj its aim and Humanity its goal. His poems and ballads have enchanted and inspired numerous patriots, and, though suppressed by Government, were secretly circulated from sire to son. No other Bharatiya poet except Valmiki, Vyas and the great poets Chand and Bhushan—the latter pair sang the declining glory of the Rajputs—has sung of glorious victories of the Hindus, Hindu life, history and culture so immensely and epically as Savarkar has done. No other modern Hindu poet has preached and propagated love for Swaraj and Swadharma so intensely, fervently and stirringly as Savarkar has done. Savarkar represents an admirable combination of the valour of Veer Arjun and the poetic genius of Veda Vyas!

Sri G. T. Madkholkar, an eminent Mahratta literary critic, describes Savarkar as a poet who rivals Kalidas in the use of similes, a poet on the war path bristling with vigour, genius, learning and the lustre of the spear of the Mahratta warriors, who hammered the Mogul throne of Delhi to pieces and the sweetness of all the emotions of the Mahratta saint-poets who have raised this mortal world to the level of the abode of Vishnu. "It is because of all this," observes Madkholkar, "that I make bold to say that Savarkar occupies the first and foremost place in the galaxy of Marathi poets."

According to Madkholkar, Savarkar is perhaps the only poet who has during the last thirty years made conscious efforts to inflame the urge for independence and the sense of self-respect by holding before the Hindus, who were deprived of their freedom, the grand picture of the ancient glory and the valiant deeds of the past. The reason why all of Savarkar's literary productions have assumed such a fascinating and sublime quality is that Savarkar has so beautifully and lavishly made use of Vedic, epic and historical ideas in his poetry, plays and other works. Madkholkar concludes: "In his poems he has strung together so many beautiful and sublime ideas about Hindu life, culture, philosophy, and history that in the poetry of no modern poet of the last hundred years can they ever be found."

Savarkar's poetry has an autobiographical note and is

subjective *par excellence*. He is a poet of action, of great personal experience, of lofty imagination, of noble emotions, of great sincerity and of great personality. His poetry bears a unique charm. His is great poetry of rare thrill, epic sweep, sky-high range, and grand metre! His thoughts breathe, his words burn. Though hurled from the summit of a mountain into the limitless ocean, or into the frying-pan, the undying soul of Savarkar, like Pralhad, survives and sings songs of God and Man. Himself a subject of an epic, he has produced an epic. Poet Savarkar belongs to the line of great poets. It is easy and safe for a poetical soul to sing mystic and vague songs of grand eternity, eyeless fraternity and aimless liberty at a time when his own kith and kin are ground under the heels of slavery and poverty. But it is given to a few poets of Savarkar's nerve and mission to raise the fallen in revolt and to drive a slave country to a fight for freedom. The reward for the former class is some coveted prize. The prize for the latter cast is the rope! Only the definite, daring and self-experienced poetry can soar in the realm of this inspired class.

There are good poets in Marathi. But in the words of Dr. K. N. Watwe, Ph.D., and Acharya Atre, two foremost authorities on Sanskrit and Marathi Poetry respectively, even a dozen of that class would not together make one Savarkar. The difference between them and Savarkar is the difference between the simile and the metaphor. Some of them have repeated or expressed the thoughts of others, the sensations of others, the emotions of others. Savarkar has expressed his own emotions, his own sensations, his own thoughts. His style may, at some places, lack the 'correctitude' of strict school-masters and dry professors. In that Deathland he could not prune and polish it! Yet, in personality, in sincerity, in style, and in prophetic vision, he is superior to them all. In greatness of sweep, in loftiness of imagination, in the gift of prophetic vision, he scarcely yields to the great ones of world poetry. Take, for example, Savarkar's *magnum opus* in poetry, the Kamala. His Kamala rivals in delineation and delicacy with Shakespeare's Miranda or Shakuntala of Kalidas.

Savarkar's creative imagination is powerful and is ever on

its wings. In the twinkling of an eye it perches on the tower of the universe. "It surveys the royal procession of the Lord of the Universe marching in pomp and splendour. The ages are its miles and through the friction of the wheels of His Chariot have sprung dusty sparks that are shining as stars. In its pomp and splendour the procession is climbing down the path of Time. The comets are its arrows, the solar system is the row of fireworks going on. Suns and Moons are torches and Life is its energy!" To Savarkar's lofty imagination the whole universe is the image of God, Shiva. The limitless sky is its hair and in it are the Moon and the Milky Way!

Savarkar compares lotuses in water to half-nude Gopikas bewitched by Krishna, bathing in the Yamuna. To him Kamala, the heroine in his long Poem, looks as fascinating in a porched sofa as does a simile in the poetry of Kalidas. He describes her beauty in a marvellous simile. To him Kamala looks like the sweet dawn between fading moonlight and blooming of the day. To him at dawn stars look like the frozen drops of dew. He calls the butterfly an agent of the God of Love or Cupid that flies from flower to flower transporting kisses. Flowers are the imprints of kisses taken by the watchman of the nymphs who enter the garden secretly. In his famous Ballad on Sinhagad, the sea, the mother of gems, envies the lot of the earth because it has sheltered the invaluable jewel Tanaji, who fell fighting on the Kondana Fort.

What great, grand and good poetry! The wonder of it is that it blossomed in the wild Andamans! The collection of his poems are aptly named as "Wild Flowers." These flowers have not met with world-wide appreciation for want of an agency that would distribute these flowers among the appreciating public of the world at large. Though complete in themselves, "Kamala," "Gomantak," "Saptarshi," "Virahochhvas" "Mahasagara" are parts of the incomplete epic. His other poems, "Chain," "Cell," "Chariot festival of Lord Jagannath," "Oh Sleep," and "On Death Bed" have a philosophical basis. These poems shed a searchlight on the innermost corner of the heart of Savarkar who loves entire secession from worldly affairs and who is in his heart of hearts an ascetic loving a retired and contemplative life intent on

soul-contemplation! To Savarkar engrossed in such soul-contemplation the very Shanivar Wada, the perennial source of political inspiration, is a heap of stones! But the world around has not reached that divine stage of viewing things through such an angle! Peoples are crying for food, freedom, and faith. The worldly man comes out and he is Savarkar, the revolutionary realist! Did the great Shankaracharya study modern science and world and make his reappearance in Bharat Varsha?

Hence it is clear that Savarkar's outlook on life is that of an ascetic moving in great events. Love of action and not renunciation of action has become the predominant and positive note of his life and literature. His views on the Vedant philosophy are ever to be remembered. He writes from the Andamans to his brother: "The Americans need Vedanta philosophy and so does England, for they have developed their life to that fulness, richness and manliness—to Kshatriyahood and so stand on the threshold of that Brahminhood, wherein alone the capacity to read and realize such philosophy can co-exist. But India is not. We are at present all Shudras and can't claim access to the *Vedas* and Vedanta. . . . We, as a nation, are unfit for these sublime thoughts, for it is well known that Bajirao II was a great Vedantist and that is why, perhaps, he could not see the difference between a kingdom and a pension. Let us study history, political science, science, economy; live worthily in this world, fulfil the householders' duties and then the philosophic dawn might come."

To him life on this earth is like a three petalled flower. One is coloured with pleasure, the second with the colour of pain, the third mixed or colourless. Now the petal of pleasure and then that of pain gets warmed and thus this vain round of recurrence goes on. According to him the true picture of the world is one wherein a tigress with a piece of flesh of deer in its mouth is suckling its babe, a picture of pity and cruelty. Savarkar is not a bloodthirsty man. He is guided by the noble precept laid down by Lord Krishna: "Do unto others as thou wouldst be done by." He says he was a revolutionary under necessity and not by inherent choice. He sincerely abhors absolute violence. Where is the man

who would run the ordeals of fire or would tread the paths of furies with bleeding feet for sheer amusement, he asks. He is a man who always fights for a just and righteous cause, for the protection of the good and for the destruction of the evil-doers. "For it was this very principle," he *states*, "*that* humanity was a higher patriotism that made us so restless when we saw that a part of it should aggrandise and swell like a virulent cancer in such wise as to threaten the life of the human whole, and forced us, for want of any other effective remedy, to take to the surgeon's knife and feel that severity for the moment would certainly be mercy in the long run." He says in his poem, "On Death Bed": "If ever I deemed it legitimate to have recourse to the exceptional swift and severe rules of emergency, it was only because duty led me and my generation into circumstances so abnormal and urgent as to render them indispensable in the interest of righteousness itself." Duty for the sake of duty! And he interpreted that duty of man. He says: "Though the wise men, priests and sooth-sayers speak differently and in diverse accents, yet whatever conduces to the progress of Man, whatever contributes to the greatest good of the human soul and had been approved by the pious and the pure that alone I took to be the Duty of Man."

Death had no horrors for Savarkar. He said that he had paid the debt of the Motherland by facing the furious fire, getting himself consumed bone by bone and flesh by flesh, that he had paid the debt of God by fighting under 'His Banner,' that he had adopted the Abhinava Bharat to continue the line of his family. He realized the kinship with all that breathed in the Universe and at times was so overpowered with a sense of Universal sympathy that his feet would get stuck to the spot lest he should trample to death under his feet some blades of grass, or worms. Often in his pensive mood he held the morsel in his hand, thinking that it contained seeds which were flesh and life striving to grow and enjoy the air they breathed.

If he dies in despair, he says, he will not feel sorry for there is no end to one's desires and ambitions. If the end of life is shifting to another life according to merits, he is confident that a good place will be reserved for him as he possesses the

best testimonials from Lord Krishna himself that he served selflessly for the cause of Man, God and Country. If life is to disintegrate into fragments and atoms, death will be to him a sound sleep in that case; or let those atoms, he says, forget themselves and let the 'I' in him disappear into the Universal oneness!

Yet one more point is to be noted about Savarkar, the poet. He has introduced blank verse metre called 'Vainayak' into Marathi poetry. The Anushtubha metre of the *Ramayana* and the *Mahabharata* fame, Milton's blank verse metre which poet Madhusudan of Bengal has popularized in Bengal, charmed him exceedingly in his school and Andaman days.

The romanticism in Savarkar's poetry has been properly bridled by a sense of realism, a love of service and sacrifice, and a goal of universalism. His head is towering up in the Universe, his mind weighing good and bad, and his eyes watchful for the greatest good of Man. Front-rank critics and great ones of Marathi literature from N. C. Kelkar to G. T. Madkholkar, from Daji Nagesh Apte to P. K. Atre, all have paid glowing tributes to his genius and have been fascinated by the flights of Savarkar's imagination conveying great and good thoughts!

II

In the Andamans Savarkar had ample time to philosophize his political theories and theorise his political philosophy. His thoughts, reading and experience evolved into a definite ideology. The seeds of his ideology took firm root and sprouted into a tree. The decrease in the population of the Hindus and the consequent danger to Hindusthan by the rise of rival and alien proselytizing faiths absorbed his mind. In Europe people belong to one religion. There strife is between races for predominance and domination. In India it is a question of rival religions, where kidnapping and conversion are ostensibly done in the name of religion to strengthen a rival faith. The danger Savarkar scented was clear, straight, and tremendous.

Though the British Government had to resort to a policy of non-interference in religious affairs, they were in a way not inclined to curb the proselytizing activities of the Muslims.

Mosques, markets, habitats of Muslim robbers and the prison houses had been free fields for the conversion of the Hindus. Whenever news came to Savarkar about the conversion of a Hindu lad or a prisoner, he was restless and he *turned his* mind devotedly to the serious threat, outwardly a religious but inwardly a crucial problem of national importance and existence.

Almost all Indian jails having Hindu prisoners by majority, the authorities naturally would appoint non-Hindus to watch and control the prisoners. Hence Muslims easily rose to the posts of petty officers and havaldars and warders. And those Pathans, to quote the verdict of the Cardew Commission, 'enjoyed a bad pre-eminence as the active agents in the matter of unnatural vices.' They turned these opportunities to bad account and harassed and forced Hindu convicts to embrace Islam. The revolutionaries in the Cellular Jail were almost exhausted due to their great efforts in agitation and action in India and sufferings in the Andamans. In those hard, helpless, and hopeless days none of them desired to aggravate their hard lot by opposing the religious fanaticism of the wicked and vile Pathan petty officers. Obviously from fear some of them tried unworthily to cloak their cowardice with a display of great tolerance and broad-mindedness. It mattered little to those progressive men whether that vile and fallen lot of wretched Hindus remained in or went out of their fold and field ! 'Let it be so,' summed up their social, individual and mental psychology. What was worse, some even miserably passed days, giving the Muslim warders high hopes of their self-conversion.

Suffering for a nation's welfare is a public and personal duty. Savarkar was doing it in jail. Why this additional burden ? But then a report of a conversion of a Hindu or an injustice done to a prisoner would inflame him. Like a lion helpless in a cage, he restlessly fluttered over the insult and injustice done to the racial, national, or religious soul. So with curses on his head, cares in his heart, burden on his back and troubles under his feet, he resolved to put a stop to the conversion activities of the Muslims.

With that aim in view he began to shake off the passivity in the Hindus, activise their efforts, change their tone and

tendencies, mould them into an organism alive to every injury, and make them masters of their fate and land. To the broad-minded and wiseacres he asked as to why the non-Hindus tried to win over to their fold that base, wicked, corrupt lot of dangerous drunkards and murderers. They said the Muslims were fanatic and with them reason did not weigh. Well, why did these cool and cultured Europeans use the hoe of gold for removing that mud in Indian villages, woods and valleys ? Indeed, to fertilize their lands of influence with the manure ! Savarkar asked his colleagues why those Westerners polluted their holy religion by that vile and worthless lot of humanity ? Why should the Missionaries and Maulavies render service or offer food and shelter as a price for religion and never from a humanitarian angle ? If the ulterior motive of these Missionaries and Maulanas was that their religion and interests should dominate the world, then let the Hindus have the freedom to serve Humanity in their own way. Let the Hindus aim at increasing their numerical strength to fight their struggle for existence and material well-being. Thus went forth his chain of arguments.

Savarkar impressed upon the minds of his colleagues that it was not a fact that a vicious man necessarily gave birth to vicious men. New Australia and Canada had sprung up from such vile and base elements thrown away from their mother countries. He reminded them that the *Ramayana*, one of the best epics of the world, was given to the world by Valmiki, a man fallen in early life. Losing one man was losing numerous future families and increasing the numerical strength of the rival faiths in India !

Allured by comforts, enticed by passion, baited by vices and dreaded by tortures, a few Hindu prisoners in the Andamans were driven into the fold of Islam. The jail administration did not take these conversions seriously. One day it became known to Savarkar that a Hindu boy was on the verge of conversion. When the superintendent came on his rounds, Savarkar cried out, " Application, Sir ! " The Superintendent asked him to see and speak for himself. Savarkar tauntingly asked him whether the Superintendent had ordered the other prisoners also, who caught their letters or trapped the revolutionaries, to mind their own business. Savarkar said

angrily that he would make a complaint; let him hear or not. The Superintendent toned down. He then informed the Superintendent about the likely conversion. The Superintendent asked him as to why the Hindus did not convert Muslims instead of making complaints against them. Savarkar stated that Hinduism was a non-proselytizing religion. He told the officer that Hinduism was based on the noblest possible principles. To Hindus, he said, religion was not like the colour of the chameleon. He concluded: "It is their received and noble belief that all the religions of the world are at the bottom one and have the same aim, namely the welfare of humanity. The Hindus never look upon religion as a means of wordly strength and social solidarity. That is in my opinion their fundamental blunder from the point of view of national strength and solidarity." The Superintendent understood Savarkar's stand well. He asked Savarkar what he expected the authorities to do. Savarkar stated that no prisoner should be converted to any other religion by fraud, force, deception, or enticement without the knowledge and consent of the jail authorities, who on their part should certify the *bona fides* of every case. He added that all minors should be brought up in their parents' faith until they were able to judge the things for themselves. The Superintendent agreed. And while departing he rated the Pathan warder who was about to execute the conversion in question.

The boy in question was saved, but the Hindu prisoners would not allow him to sit in their file for meals. He sat beside Savarkar. So they called Savarkar Bhangi Babu. In the end Savarkar persuaded some of them to discard that suicidal attitude and by and by the Shuddhi spirit came to stay. It was a great news all over the Andamans that Savarkar had stopped the conversion of a Hindu. Upon this some convicts, who had come across the creeds and propaganda of the Arya Samaj in India, were organized and with the help of some fearless and bullying prisoners, some prisoners were reconverted to Hinduism, their mother fold. Those Sanatanists who had called Savarkar Bhangi Babu now began to look at the problem from a new angle of vision, knew the value of solidarity and strength and the farsighted aim of

Savarkar and supported him. Even a Christian of long standing was reconverted to Hinduism; later on several Muslim attempts were foiled by an eleventh-hour intervention or early precautions. The Muslims complained against Savarkar that he converted even born Muslims to Hinduism. Hindus realised now that Muslims could be converted to Hinduism. Muslim converts and warders reviled Savarkar incessantly, but were silenced by the turbulent Hindu convicts drilled in the art of railing. A new idea caught the imagination of the Hindus. They now learnt that no man lost his faith because he took food, drink and shelter outside his faith. The new-comers began to bear Hindu names, read Hindu scriptures and take meals with their co-religionists. Hindu temples in the colony were opened to them by and by. Formerly at the wharf of Port Blair the Hindu prisoner-workers sometimes had to starve as they refused to take food from the bags mischievously touched by Muslims. Savarkar showed them their humiliating plight and suicidal foolishness and encouraged them to touch the bags of food first themselves. They did so and the Muslims, knowing the reaction and the double edge of the weapon, stopped the mischievous nonsense!

Despite the danger of personal violence, Barrie's intrigues and incitement against him and the threats of murder from Barrie's lackeys, Savarkar could succeed in infusing an organic feeling among the Hindu prisoners and even catching the imagination of Hindus in the Colony. Once a Muslim ruffian incited by Barrie struck a blow on Babarao Savarkar's head. Babarao bled profusely. Barrie rejoiced at the accident. Savarkar remarked: "Where dreaded gallows failed to subdue the spirit of the Savarkars, can these goats ever succeed?"

Just then the census hour struck and Savarkar persuaded the Arya Samagists and the Sikhs to record their caste and religion as Hindu or at least Hindu, with the words Arya or Sikh in the bracket. Ever since his London days Savarkar was thinking over a national definition of a 'Hindu' that would embrace all the folds of Hindus—the Sanatanists, the Sikhs, the Brahmos, the Arya Samajists and others. At last he, in a divine moment, composed his famous definition in a

melodious couplet. According to it 'A Hindu means a person who regards this land of Bharat-Varsha from the Indus to the Seas as his Fatherland as well as his Holyland, that is the cradle land of his religion.' That definition he developed and brought out in a thesis after his transfer from the Andamans to the Ratnagiri Jail. The chaos and confusion created by nearly fifty current definitions of the word Hindu including the one made by Tilak, which was frankly religious, were brought politically, socially, religiously in order, method, historic perspective and scientific thought. This definition of the word Hindu by Savarkar is held by many as the greatest contribution to Hindu thought, history and polity.

Savarkar holds that Shuddhi—reconversion—solidifies and strengthens the Hindu Society. He asks the Hindus to shed inferiority complex and the idea of contamination by non-Hindus in respect of food, water, shelter and touch so that there should be less cause for friction and fight between Hindus and Muslims; because the Muslims being deprived of their throne and sword, the only means that remained for them was rationalism. He is of the opinion that every one should be allowed to propagate the cause and mission of his religion by a rational and peaceful way. He never hated the Muslims because they belonged to a different religion. He abhorred the aggressive, unjust and wild designs of the Moslems and Missionaries. Excepting those points, Savarkar fought for all prisoners alike and the facilities wrested were enjoyed by Muslims too.

When a few years after Savarkar was appointed foreman in charge of the oil-mill work, he never harassed the Muslim prisoners because they were Muslims. He treated them justly and kindly, but warned them not to harass the Hindus, or not to soil the water in the tank by cleansing their feet in it, or not to do purposely less work and bring him into trouble. Muslims began to say 'Ram Ram' and a tiny Hindu Raj came into being in the Andamans. No mischief, no trouble, no punishment. Merchants, traders, or wealthy men under the guise of merchants went to have a glimpse of the Foreman of the tiny Hindu Kingdom whose capital was the oil-depot. Untouchability had disappeared from the kingdom. Pan-Hindu consciousness was pulsating through

Hindu veins. Savarkar had been hammering into the heads of his colleagues and convicts that among the social institutions, the greatest curse of India was the caste-system. "The mighty current of Hindu life," he said, "is being threatened to perish in bogs and sands." He added: "It is no good saying, 'We will reduce it to four caste system first'. That would not and should not be. It must be swept away root and branch."[1] Many a time he would touchingly remark that the curse of caste-system had deprived India of several great brains. He also strongly disapproved the Andhrasabha movement and similar disintegrating moves. He disliked that every province should desire separation and shout and *invoke long life to itself.* How could the province live unless the nation lived, he asked. "They all—Maharashtra, Bengal, Madras—are great and will live long but through her-India! So let us not say '*Andramataki*' but '*Bharatmataki Jai*' of whom Andhra is a limb and let us sing not 'Vanga Abhar, but Hind Abhar'."[2] he warned.

Years glided by. A sense of oneness and noble patriotism began to throb through the veins of the Andamans. At such a time the death of the great Tilak in 1920 shocked India and its repercussions reached the Cellular Jail. All prisoners observed a day of fast in memory of the Father of Indian unrest. The fast was swiftly and silently organised to the surprise of the jail authorities. Tilak's dramatic disappearance caused the sudden appearance of Gandhiji, a man of boundless capacity and fabulous energy, on the political stage! Writing on the subversive movements in India, Mr. J. C. Ker, who was a member of the Indian Civil Service from 1901 to 1929, observed: "The death of Tilak in August 1920 removed his (Gandhiji's) strongest rival for the Hindu Leadership, and early in 1921 the campaign of Mr. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers was in full swing."[3]

III

World War I broke out in August 1914 as forecast by Savarkar in his London days. But alas! He was not free

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 32.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 36.
[3] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 237.

to utilize the golden opportunity to free his nation. Yet he felt the situation advantageous to India in many respects. "It sent a thrill of delight," he wrote, in March 1915, from the Cellular Jail, "in my heart to hear that the Indian troops were allowed to go to Europe, in their thousands to fight against the best military power in the world and that they had acquainted themselves with such splendour and were covered with military glory. Thank God! Manliness after all is not dead yet in the land."[1] Considering that the needs and difficulties of the British Government were the seeds of and opportunity for Indian progress, Tilak strategically supported the militarisation policy of the Indian Government. But, strangely enough, Gandhiji, the apostle of peace and non-violence, surprised the country when he girded up his loins, trod and toured the country and panted for recruiting unconditionally soldiers for the British Power to give blood-bath to the Germans. Tilak's step was responsive and statesmanly. Gandhiji's step was emotional and devotional and need not surprise the rationalists. The Indian revolutionaries in Europe and America now decided to throw their whole weight into the direction of a revolt. They prepared themselves for an all-out struggle for overthrowing the British rule in India. To that end the revolutionary leaders like Lala Hardayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya of the Abhinava Bharat, and Raja Mahendra Pratap were busy discussing plans and spinning negotiations with Germany. With full support of the German War Cabinet they set up an Indian Independence League in Germany under the Chairmanship of Sri Champaka Raman Pillai. Accordingly, world-wide plans were devised to smuggle lakhs of rifles and ammunition through the Muslim countries and Tibet for the revolutionaries of the Ghadr party in the Punjab, to land the revolutionaries of the Ghadr party in Bengal and attack the Eastern Frontiers of India. One of the major plans was to raid Port Blair and pick up their leader Savarkar and other revolutionaries from the Andamans. The Sedition Committee Report tells us that a third steamer was to sail to the Andamans, shipping a cargo of arms at sea and raid Port

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 33.

Blair, pick up anarchists and convicts.'[1] Mr. J. C. Ker, referring to the plans of the German Government, states: "During the war efforts were made by the Germans to use the Indian revolutionaries for their own purposes. Elaborate and world-wide plans were devised to land arms in Bengal for the use of the revolutionaries there, and emissaries proceeded between the leaders in India and German representatives in Batavia and elsewhere to complete the arrangements."[2] The revolutionary leaders recruited and inspired Indians abroad to fight for the Independence of their Motherland under the banner of Ghadr party initiated by the leaders of the Abhinava Bharat and inspired by Savarkar's slogans, Savarkar's book *War of Independence of 1857*, his pamphlets and his personality. Pictures showing Savarkar at the oil-mill were flashed in Ghadr papers in San Francisco and other American papers. Thus the oil Savarkar pressed out at the oil-mill in the Andamans did not fall into the bucket down below, but outside it and inflamed the fire and wrath of the Ghadr revolutionaries. And so the remark made by Sir J. C. Ker that "with his (Savarkar's) removal, the society in London ceased to be of any great consequence, and on the outbreak of the Great War it was broken up,"[3] is not wholly true; for the heads of the Ghadr were the lieutenants of Savarkar. Simply for the sake of safety and strategy the headquarters were shifted to the United States of America.

As pre-planned by the revolutionaries with the German Government, the German war machine began to operate. The German submarine, *Emden*, moved in the Bay of Bengal raiding British cargo-ships, bombarding some of the places on the Eastern coast of India, striking terror into the hearts of the authorities of the Andamans and causing sleepless nights to the Indian Government. There was a rumour in the Andamans that the *Emden* was to pick up Savarkar and send him in a German aeroplane to the headquarters of the Ghadr. Savarkar had also discussed this possibility with his colleagues in the Cellular Jail and was fully aware of it. But at this juncture he was removed to the tower of the central building

[1] Sedition Committee's Report, p. 124.
[2] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 233.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 232.

of the jail, and was strictly watched. In the meanwhile, in November 1914, the famous *Emden* was destroyed and the escape of Savarkar could not be effected. The French Government insincerely handed Savarkar to the British Government and the German Government struggled for his rescue !

In their other plans the revolutionaries succeeded considerably. About 8,000 Sikh revolutionaries arrived in India from America, Canada and the Far East in 1915, and the situation in the Punjab became tense and threatening. "The internal situation began to grow menacing," writes Lord Hardinge in his memoirs, "owing to the revolutionaries realising the military weakness consequent on depletion of the Indian troops." Alarmed by the growing menace, pressure and incursion of the revolutionaries, Lord Handinge, the Governor-General of India, got the Defence of Realms Act passed by the Legislative Assembly. Describing this critical situation, Mr. J. C. Ker says: "Early in the war a serious situation developed in the Punjab, arising out of the return from America of Sikhs who had been demoralized by the teaching of the Ghadr party. During the first three years of the War some 8,000 Sikhs came back from the United States, Canada, and the Far East. . . . Several risings were attempted, and efforts were made in two or three instances to seduce the Indian regiments. A large number of dacoities and murders were committed in many of the Punjab districts, and efforts were made to raise a rebellion." [1]

The War of Independence of 1857 had been suppressed with the help of the Sikhs. To wash out the odium from the history of 1857 this Second War of Independence was started by an overwhelming number of Sikh revolutionaries. They buzzed to undermine the loyalty of the Indian troops in India and Siam and induce them to take up the cause of freedom. There was trouble with the 10th Baluchis of which the Mashud company shot their officer in Bombay on their way to Mesopotamia. Revolutionary strongholds were discovered at Delhi, Lahore and Meerut. The brilliant Vishnu Ganesh Pingle from Maharashtra was arrested with ten loaded bombs inside the line of the 12th Cavalry at Meerut

[1] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 234.

and was hanged. Conspiracies aimed at robbing the armoury and magazine of certain regiments were discovered at Lahore, Pindi and Ferozepore. In Bengal, too, the revolutionaries were striving their level best to achieve their goal. Writing about this Mr. J. C. Ker observes: "Money (from Germany) was sent to the conspirators in Calcutta, and the nucleus of a training camp was set up in a remote spot in the jungle. This hiding place was discovered, and in a fight between the police and a party of the Bengalis armed with Mauser pistols, the leader was killed, and the plot collapsed. Another plan organised with the help of the Ghadr party was to enter Burma through Siam, and after gaining over the military police to proceed to the conquest of India."[1] Armed with extensive powers and with the help of the 6,000 troops from Nepal, the British Government ruthlessly suppressed this heroic rising. There was a holocaust of victims at the altar of freedom. Some five thousand men were put on trial for treason in the Punjab alone. Five hundred revolutionaries were tried by court-martial and executed, eight hundred were sentenced to transportation for life, ten thousand were interned without trial, and a large number had to remain underground for years.

Setting aside its previous decision of not transporting the prisoners to the Andamans, the British Government transported about 500 revolutionaries, who had thus taken part, fought and failed in the Second War of Independence, to the Andamans. Prominent among them was Bhai Parmananda, who had already come into contact with Savarkar during the latter's London days. On their arrival in the Cellular Jail the revolutionary leaders narrated to Savarkar how his writings and the great book on '1857' and his sacrifice had a magic effect in changing them overnight into patriots and warriors! The new batch of the prisoners was made of farmers, workers and businessmen. It was difficult for the jail authorities to bend them to their will. There were point blank refusals. Nobody would do hard work. For a time the jailer and the Superintendent seemed to lower their voice and the standard of work, and requested them to work as best as they could. There were scuffles and broils over bad

[1] *Political India*, edited by Sir John Cumming, p. 233.

words. Words of abuse were returned with blows, and consequently many noble and spirited patriots from this group perished in their helpless fight with the cruel jail authorities in their prime of youth.

During the war period Savarkar made vigorous attempts to effect his release. He made petitions and appeals to the Government of India that he should be released with or without conditions or at least be enlisted in the volunteer corps. The authorities knew his intention and were not at all willing to do so. To them a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush! Savarkar asked his younger brother Dr. Savarkar, in his annual letter why the Indian National Congress had not uttered a word of sympathy and fought shy of speaking about the release of political prisoners when responsible leaders like General Botha released all Boer rebels or John Edward Redmond struggled and succeeded in getting all the Irish prisoners released. He wrote to his brother to agitate in the matter and send a public petition so that, if at all the release came at any time, it would be acceptable as a token of the countrymen's love and remembrance for those who never ceased to love their land of birth and rightly or wrongly fell fighting for her. Thereupon provincial conferences passed resolutions demanding the release of 'political prisoners.' But it was seen that there was some vagueness about the phrase 'political prisoner,' prevailing in the Press and the statements of politicians and resolutions of the conferences. Savarkar, therefore, asked his brother to note that the term political could be distinguished from 'private' only by the criterion of the motive of the act and not by the act itself. He said: "No act is or can be by itself political. For even a rebellion, if that proceeds entirely for my own bread and butter, is not political and ought not to create any sympathy in others." So he informed his brother that the point should definitely be pressed that "political prisoners means all those undergoing imprisonment whether convicted or not, whether for individual acts or acts in general, for actions which proceeded from purely and admittedly political motives."[1]

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 66.

In his petitions to the Viceroy and Mr. E. S. Montagu, Secretary of State for India, Savarkar submitted to them that while they were considering the question of Reforms in India they should release all political prisoners. Grant of reforms and grant of amnesty for all prisoners and exiles in foreign lands should go hand in hand. He said: "How can there be peace and contentment and trust in a land where a brother is torn away from a brother, where thousands upon thousands are rotting in cage cells and stand exiled and in jails, and where every other family has a brother or a son, a father or a friend, or a lover snatched away from its bosom and kept pining away his life in the parched and thirsty Saharas of Separation!" And if progress is made easy, he asks: "Where is the man who would run the ordeals of fire or would tread the paths of furies with bleeding feet for sheer amusement!" He continued: "That is rare and rarer it is to find a true patriot and humanitarian who would indulge in reckless and bloody and necessarily outrageous revolutions —if but and even when, a safer, nobler, more certainly moral because entirely effective and employing least resistance— if but such a Path, the Path of constitutional progress be open and accessible to him?" He added: "It is a mockery to talk of constitutional agitation when there is no constitution at all, but it is worse than a mockery, a crime, to talk of revolutions as if it were a work of rose water even when there is as elastic and progressive a constitution as, say, there is in England or in America."[1]

Needless to say, this petition was indirectly and obviously a pressure on the Government and a support on behalf of the revolutionary party to the national forces that were demanding responsible Government in India. Indian Government wanted to know the views of the revolutionary party on the proposed Reforms and so its accredited leader, Savarkar, was asked by the authorities to offer his views on the drafts of the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms. Even in the published Draft of Mr. E. S. Montagu's scheme was expressed the hope that the revolutionists would now find something to be done constitutionally for the realization of their hopes and aspirations and would change their minds and return to

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 72.

useful paths of activity.[1] The blood of martyrs never drops in vain. They die so that humanity may prosper!

Savarkar gives in his letter dated July 6, 1920, a brief summary of his new petition to the Indian Government and depicts his ideal of *Human Government* or *World Commonwealth* Viewed from the angle of truth, sympathy, justice, impartiality and looking to the times, this letter will reveal why Guy A. Aldred of Britain claims for Savarkar a place in the line of prophets and humanists of the world. Those who boast of their broad-mindedness and large sympathies and dream of world Federation should pause for a while to read the following passage from Savarkar and compare it with their present ideal, for Savarkar declared his ideal when they were, speaking politically, in their swaddling clothes. Savarkar observes in 1920:

"We believe in a universal state embracing all mankind and wherein all men and women would be citizens working for and enjoying equally the fruits of this earth and this sun, this land and this light, which constitute the real Motherland and Fatherland of Man. All other divisions and distinctions are artificial though indispensable. Believing thus that the ideal of all political Science and Art is or ought to be a *Human State* in which all nations merge their political selves for their own fulfilment even as the cells in an organism, organisms in families and tribes, and tribes in nation states have done, and believing therefore the humanity is higher patriotism and therefore any Empire or Commonwealth that succeeds in welding numbers of conflicting races and nations in one harmonious, if not homogeneous whole in such wise as to render each of them better fitted to realize, enrich and enjoy life in all its noble aspects in a distinct step to the realization of that ideal. I can consciously co-operate with any attempt to found a Commonwealth which would be neither British nor Indian but which may, till a better name be devised, be styled as an Aryan Commonwealth." He concludes: "With this end in view I ever worked in the past. With this end in view I am willing to work now. And therefore I rejoiced to hear that the Government have changed their angle of vision and

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, p. 71.

meant to make it possible for India to advance constitutionally on the path to Freedom and strength and fulness of life. I am sure that many a revolutionist would like me cry halt under such circumstances and try to meet England under an honourable truce, even in a half-way house as the reformed Council Halls promised to be, and work there before a further march on to progress be sounded."[1]

[1] Savarkar, *An Echo from Andamans*, pp. 88-89.

CHAPTER VIII
Out of his Grave

I

The World War I terminated in 1918 and soon after a systematic and persistent propaganda was carried on throughout the country for the release of all political prisoners. People, popular leaders and the Press voiced their demand for the release of political prisoners through petitions, meetings, Conferences, Congress Sessions and in Councils. The National Union of Bombay, Sri Anantrao Gadre, Senapati Bapat and Sri Shivrampant Paranjpe took a leading part in collecting signatures of the people on the petition and the great petition was forwarded to Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India. The Secretary of State for India rejected it. The Amritsar Congress demanded the release of all political prisoners by a special resolution. The District Home Rule Leagues from Maharashtra, too, wired to the Viceroy demanding the release of the Savarkar brothers. The royal proclamation in connection with the royal clemency to political prisoners issued on December 24, 1919, stated in clear terms: "I therefore direct my Viceroy to exercise in My name and on My behalf My Royal clemency to political prisoners in the fullest measure which, in his judgment, is compatible with public safety. I desire to extend it on this condition to persons who, for offences against the State or under any special or emergency legislation are suffering imprisonment or restriction upon their liberty."

According to this proclamation all provincial Governments opened the gates of their prisons. Many political and ordinary prisoners were set free from provincial jails and the Cellular Jail too. Even those who had come after Savarkar or were his co-prisoners were released, but the Government of India held Savarkar's release incompatible with public safety. In his case all rules were literally and strictly, and many a time unjustly, enforced. Ordinary prisoners were allowed to settle

on the Island after five years' imprisonment, but the Savarkar brothers were singled out as an exception to this rule even after ten years. All hard-skinned convicts were given light work, but the soft-skinned Savarkars were given the hardest possible work from the beginning. After eight long years Government permitted Dr. N. D. Savarkar to see his brothers in the Cellular Jail. Savarkar's wife and Dr. Savarkar saw him in the last week of May 1919. The Savarkar brothers were startled to find the absence of Srimati Yashodabai, wife of Babarao Savarkar. The struggling flame of her noble life had flickered away just two months ago! And Yashoda Vahini was to Savarkar his earliest friend, his sister, his mother and his comrade—all in one, all at once. She really died as dies a *satee*! Deserted by all relatives, cursed as the wife of a convict by unpatriotic persons, separated from her husband, crushed by overwhelming grief, she perished in her unconscious state with the only thought of the *Darshan* of her husband. Another lady, Savarkar ever remembered with grateful tributes, was Madame Cama who had been a second mother to his younger brother and stood so nobly and so faithfully by them in the darkest hour of their life. "At the touch of one such faithful, noble, unshaken, loving hand," wrote Savarkar, "one's heart recovers its belief in Humanity —belief rudely shaken by the disappearance of the closest and by the treachery of the truest and by the indifference of the dearest." The above-cited interview terminated in an hour in the presence of the jail authorities, Savarkar being given some time to speak to his wife separately.

As regards other facilities, Savarkar was given the work of a clerk and afterwards was allowed to work as the foreman of the oil-depot and department in the latter part of 1920. The authorities even allowed him to enjoy at times the moonlit nights and starlit dawn which he loved so immensely, in the jail yard with his brother Ganeshpant *alias* Babarao! Barrie, who expected to see the bones of Savarkar in the Andamans, had gone away to lay his bones in safety as he feared that any one of Savarkar's followers might blow up his head in India!

At last the heavy brunt Savarkar bore all along for his co-sufferers, the rigorous work, unhealthy food, crushing

anxieties, sapping climate, and the monotonous dreary and insipid life told upon his nerves. He reached the lowest point of vitality and was reduced to a skeleton. Chronic dysentery and diverse other ailments thoroughly invalidated him. He was, at last, taken to the jail hospital for treatment where tuberculosis of the lungs was suspected. Till the appearance of such a crisis in his health, for months he was sinking for want of medical help and hospital diet. For want of milk he wetted his rice with simple water. Half-boiled, half-cooked food he no longer could digest. His brother, Babarao, who was allowed at this stage to cook for himself, sent him 'Dal' secretly. But the malady was developing into a dangerous form. Later, however, in the hospital he was given milk when he could not digest it! His diet dwindled to a sip of milk. His body burnt with constant fever. He grew delirious, often fell into dead faints and was troubled with hallucinations. Forlorn, forsaken though not forgotten, he was rotting, withering and pining away in a lonely corner of the hospital, banned and barred from his near and dear ones and surrounded by unsympathetic elements. Now death began to hover over his head.

Yet with a peaceful mind and composed feelings of a true yogin Savarkar invoked death. He was content with his achievements in life. He had seen the world, done his duty and acted in great events heroically. If the end of life was the passage to another world-heaven, then he was sure of a reserved place there as he had testimonials from Lord Krishna for having done his duty for duty's sake and if the end of life was to dissolve the composition of all elements, he was prepared to immerse them in the Universal oneness! Wordsworths and Tennysons and Tagores would sing the glory of these self-experienced true feelings! Such is the grandeur, loftiness and piousness of these thoughts!

The jail life of any other Indian leader pales into insignificance before this horrible tale of Savarkar's life in the Cellular Jail. Lokmanya Tilak suffered most, but was at least enlivened by the availability of writing material, help of a cook and a special little house. Not to speak of those who were speechless and peaceless even in 'A' class rich rooms! And yet unbending, upright, and exemplary, Savarkar faced

jail life with great fortitude. He agitated but within the four corners of the law; he acted resolutely, but skilfully, and reformed the jail life. At times he had to face misunderstanding among his colleagues. But he persuaded them to realize the facts. Never did he speak ill of his colleagues, not even of Barrie who inhumanly troubled him. All political *prisoners had respect for Savarkar. The convicts regarded him as God. His spirit, soul and energy were of a deathless stamp. Almost all the political prisoners from the Andamans* with rare exceptions bade good-bye to political life afterwards. Bhai Parmananda and Sri Ashutosh Lahiri who respectively spent four and seven years in the Cellular Jail were the shining exceptions! The permanent effect of this jail life was seen later in Savarkar's health, lonely deportment, and his aloofness from the society.

During the two years 1920 and 1921 the release of political prisoners was still more persistently demanded by Indian leaders and Indian Press. Sri Vithalbhai Patel raised the question in the Central Assembly. Sri Dadasahib Khaparde, while supporting Patel, referred to the cases of the Savarkar brothers in 1920. Tilak wrote a letter to Mr. Montagu urging the release of Savarkar. In May 1920 even Gandhiji, stating that the 'cult of violence had, at the present moment, no following in India,' wrote in his *Young India* in favour of the release of the Savarkar brothers. Bhai Parmananda, after his release, saw Colonel Wedgewood then travelling in India and the Labour leader, on his return home, took up the cudgels on their behalf and expressed the terrible conditions in the Andamans through the British Press in January and February 1921. The Rev. C. F. Andrews, too, took up the cause and wrote a series of articles demanding the release of the prisoners of the Andamans. Savarkar's letters from the Andamans were printed and published in all provincial organs and given wide publicity. People and leaders were moved to read the letters. Meantime Dr. Savarkar paid a second visit to see his brother's health in the year 1920.

At this juncture the Cardew Committee that had been to the Andamans for surveying the conditions in jail submitted its report to the Government of India and consequently Government decided to close the Andamans settlement.

Savarkar propagated even at the risk of creating temporary misunderstanding that the colony should be fully developed and hence prisoners should not express their willingness to go and rot in Indian jails, rather they should develop and bring the colony to prosperity.

In 1920 Gandhiji started his non-violent non-co-operation movement in India. Swaraj was to be won within a year. Savarkar attacked the queer definitions of non-violence and truth and emphasized that the Khilafat would prove an '*affat*'—a calamity.[1] Under the influence of this movement some underground revolutionary leaders were inveigled into appearing before the police and the result was that more revolutionary leaders were exiled into the Andamans. Savarkar told his colleagues that the end of politics was neither co-operation nor non-co-operation. It always hinged on responsive co-operation; the goal of humanity was mutual co-operation, he added.[2]

In March 1921 the Hon. Sri K. V. Rangaswamy Iyengar, Member of the Council of State, moved a resolution in the House that the Savarkar brothers be released. But it was of no avail. Sri Iyengar said that he was ready to stand security for Savarkar to assure Government of his good intentions and honest motives. In the previous month the 'D' ticket was removed from Savarkar's chest.

At last came the day of Savarkar's return to his beloved Motherland. The unexpected happened. There was a stir among the prisoners and the people all over the island. Savarkar was overwhelmed with feelings at the thought of leaving those poor and patriotic hearts. Some of them stealthily or with the connivance of the guards garlanded him! Before bidding good-bye to the anxious and devotional faces, Savarkar gave the sacred oath to the chosen few:—

> One God, one country, one goal,
> One race, one life, one language.

And Oh! Look here he crossed out the ferocious gates of the Andamans amidst the indistinct greetings from his co-sufferers! London could not captivate him, *Morea* could not

[1] Savarkar, *Mazi Janmathep*, p. 496.
[2] *Ibid.*

carry him and the Andamans could not suppress him. The Mother must feed him. What a ray of hope, a sigh of relief, and a flash of emotion must have overcome the brothers! The Savarkar brothers were brought in the steamer s.s. MAHARAJAH, the same steamer that had carried them to the Deathland, and here Savarkar started on his voyage back to India with his elder brother! On board the ship a European Officer presented Savarkar his favourite book, Thomas A Kempis' *Imitation of Christ.* On the fourth day they caught sight of India! Savarkar exclaimed, "Behold Baba, the feet of Mother Bharat washed by the blue waters of the ocean." So saying they reverentially bowed their heads and shouted, "Hail Thee Goddess of Liberty! Bande Mataram!" The same unflinching love for Mother India even after such a great ordeal!

II

On their arrival the Savarkars were taken to the Alipore Jail. Savarkar was already a name to conjure with. A Chinese youth rotting in that Jail asked him whether any bullet could harm him, for he had heard many romantic stories about Savarkar. Savarkar replied that a bullet must pierce him! One policeman asked Savarkar how many days he had swum in the ocean! "Not more than ten minutes," said Savarkar. Those artless simple believing souls got angry with Savarkar for belittling his own story! Savarkar belongs to the line of rationalists and not to that of mystics and hence he never made capital of his matchless exploits.

No sooner did they arrive in the Alipore jail than the Savarkars were hit below the belt by the *Capital*, an Anglo-Indian journal of Calcutta. 'Ditchar,' writing in the *Capital*, alleged that the Savarkar brothers had conspired with the Germans. Messrs. Manilal and Kher, Solicitors of Bombay, acting on behalf of the Savarkar brothers, extracted an unconditional apology from 'Ditchar' and the *Capital*.

From Alipore the brothers were separated, Babarao being taken to Bijapur Jail from which he was released after a serious crisis in his health in 1922. Savarkar was taken to the Ratnagiri jail *via* Bombay. There the same rotation and

repetition of the rigours awaited him. What facilities he had secured in the Andamans were now lost. The monotony and insipid life once again drove him to throw away life, but he bridled his feelings and regained his balance at nightfall.

In the Ratnagiri Jail Savarkar came into contact with Khilafat prisoners and Gandhian truth-seekers. Though brought secretly, they persisted in reading the papers openly as devotees of Truth, and secured eatables through secret illegal sources and ate them stealthily. Their perverted brains did not mind, they said, if all Hindus became Moslems but they wanted Swaraj which was now a fact in sight attainable in a few months' time. The Khilafat Pathans in the Ratnagiri Jail rioted and the Hindu prisoners were saved as they were forewarned by Savarkar. It was in the Ratnagiri Jail that Savarkar's immortal work *Hindutva* was written and sent out secretly and was published under the pen name 'Mahratta'. The whole movement for Hindu Nation and Hindu polity is based on this book of Savarkar. Indeed, this book will bear out the truth that if there be any political leader in India who stands on a firm, far-reaching, profound, clear-cut, well-defined and momentous political philosophy, it is Savarkar alone. Some of his contemporaries looked to the mystic fads of their inner voices and others acted as messengers of Russian imperialism. The last chapters of this book are typically Savarkarian in grandeur, profundity, and eloquence. The poetical genius that produced the epic poetry shines through the pages of the book with eloquent reason and looks for a gleaming future! This was the need of the hour, the prescription of an expert doctor! Reading the signs of the times, Savarkar timely pointed out the ulcer that was growing and vitiating the health of Hindusthan. The book inspired the saintly soul of Swami Shraddhananda and he exclaimed: "It must have been one of those Vedic dawns indeed which inspired our seers with new truths, that revealed to the author of *Hindutva* this 'Mantra', this definition of Hindutva!"

Moved by the great aim, lofty vision and inspired exposition of the book, Sri Vijayaraghavachari, an eminent leader of light and learning, remarked, "Especially the last chapter is inimitably eloquent and patriotic. I am afraid I

am unable to find suitable words to describe my ideas regarding the book, especially the last chapter." Sri N. C. Kelkar opined that Savarkar's thesis on Hindutva unfolded a new scientific analysis of Hindutva unseen hithertofore! Later on this book became the Bible of a great movement. Savarkar's poems and parts of his unfinished epic also appeared one by one. One of them is 'Gomantak.' This is a canto describing the eighteenth century horrors in Goa. In these poems Savarkar stirs the reader to the core. The reader shudders. The poems enrage him and his face darkens with shame. The poet narrates to the reader how under the guise of love and Humanity the Portuguese in India perpetrated the vilest misdeeds which were a black tyranny and a disgrace to Humanity!

Shortly afterwards followed the transfer of Savarkar to the Yeravada Jail. There he devoted himself to the spread of literacy and to the development of the jail library, and propagated his views on the current political questions among the Gandhian prisoners. Gandhiji was then imprisoned for sedition in the Yeravada Jail. Savarkar narrated the stories of the lives of revolutionaries to the prisoners, whose knowledge of historic events was as hollow as their caps! He described their thrilling deeds, great sacrifices and selfless services to which, he said, at least their countrymen should be grateful, humanely if not patriotically! But they were struggling to secure special classes for themselves in prison. Why should they try to understand the sufferings, sacrifices and service of those dauntless revolutionary souls? He was also watchful in the prison about the conversion of Hindus. He had performed one *shuddhi* in the Ratnagiri jail and here he converted one Christian officer and his bride to the Hindu fold.

The year 1922 passed by. In 1923 at the third Ratnagiri District Political Conference, Savarkar's unconditional release was again demanded by a special resolution. The Savarkar Release Committee led by Sri Jamnadasji Mehta agitated and published one pamphlet 'Why Savarkar should be released'. A meeting was held in the Marwadi Vidyalaya, Bombay, and a strong demand was made for Savarkar's release. Sri Vithalbhai Patel was in the chair. In 1923 the Indian

National Congress at its Cocanada Session at last passed a resolution, which was moved from the chair, demanding the release of Savarkar. Now helpful winds began to blow in his direction. His Excellency Sir George Llyod, the Governor of Bombay, came with his Councillors to interview Savarkar. Lt.-Col. J. H. Murray, I.M.S., who was the Jail Superintendent in the Cellular Jail, was now at Yeravada as the Jail Superintendent. The conditions of release were prepared in the light of the discussions held between Savarkar and H.E. the Governor and his Councillors. After substituting a few words, Savarkar accepted the conditions, signed the terms and was released conditionally on January 6, 1924, from the Yeravada Jail. The terms read :—

(1) that Savarkar shall reside in the Ratnagiri District and shall not go beyond the limits of that District without the permission of Government or in case of emergency of the District Magistrate;

(2) that he will not engage publicly or privately in any manner of political activities without the consent of Government for a period of five years such restrictions being renewable at the discretion of Government at the expiry of the said term.

The release of Savarkar was hailed with great satisfaction all over India. Savarkar was taken away by Dr. Bhat to the City of Poona where Savarkar saw Sri N. C. Kelkar. Shivrampant Paranjpe, with his changed outlook, appeared before Savarkar as a distortion of the great revolutionary apostle! Paranjpe talked to Savarkar about his proposed new daily, *Nava Kal*. Savarkar abruptly remarked with a pun that he knew only the old *Kal*!

But all was not yet well. The dark night of imperialism was still reigning. The owl, popularly known as the old dame of Bori Bunder, ominously hooted in its current topics, "At Ratnagiri he will have predecessor of a very different stamp. After the third Burmese War, King Thiba was exiled to Ratnagiri and it was there that he died." What more humane and beneficial note can an owl hoot ?

The political situation in India was getting complicated since 1915. Sri S. P. Sinha, afterwards Lord Sinha, was the

last Moderate to preside over the Congress. He spoke in favour of gradual evolution and cautious progress, and his address proved to be the swan-song of the Moderates as Congressmen! The Liberals were the Moderates who had seceded from the Congress. Their big Gokhale and Mehta had passed away. The Left Wing was coming to the front. Mrs. Annie Besant's Home Rule League and Tilak's grand entry into the Lucknow Congress hastened the fall of the Liberals. On the eve of the Lucknow Session the shrewd elements in the Muslim League adopted the Congress ideal of self-government for India within the Empire. For winning support of the Muslim League to the Congress, the Congress made a pact with the Muslim League, conceding them separate representation and communal electorates. The Lucknow Pact, after Tilak's death, unfortunately proved to be a rift in the lute! The pact reduced the political problem to a simple equation. If the Muslim League represented the Indian Moslems, whom did the Congress represent? The answer was all those Indians *minus* the Muslims. The Moderates and Moonje opposed this pact from the beginning! The Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms were declared on August 20, 1917, and were published in 1918. The Congress declared the reforms as disappointing and unsatisfactory. The Moderates pronounced this scheme a substantial instalment of responsible Government to be welcomed and improved upon.

Although Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, was of the opinion that the "separate representation and communal electorates were opposed to the teaching of history", and "fatal to the democratization of institutions and caused disunion between the Hindus and the Mohammedans",[1] he yielded to the Muslim demand as he feared a Moslem rising if he did not do so. Montagu confirmed the policy of Morley and Minto and the Lucknow Pact. Gokhale's testament also held this view and his skeleton plan recognised the need for separate and direct representation of Mohammedans and other non-majority communities![2]

[1] E. S. Montagu, *An Indian Diary*, p. 100.
[2] H.H. the Aga Khan, *India in Transition*, p. 44.

Meanwhile, the Rowlatt Act was passed in 1919 and the Government of India took power to arrest and imprison any individual without trial. Tilak was then in London in connection with the Chirol case. Martial law reigned in the Punjab and roused general indignation. Then came the tragedy of Jallianwalla Baug and the inauguration of Gandhiji's non-co-operation movement in collaboration with the Khilafat Movement which was entirely religious, essentially fanatical and historically regressive. At this critical juncture Tilak passed away! The fiasco and futility of Gandhiji's non-co-operation and the collapse of the Khilafat movement turned Sri C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru to the Assembly with a view to giving organized opposition to the Government. Kelkar, Jayakar and Moonje who were sceptical of Gandhiji's political tactics and who were awakened by the Moplas' atrocities and outrages on Hindu women, men and children in Malabar made common cause with this party. The Liberals in the new Assembly carried a motion declaring that they wanted a revision or re-examination of the reformed constitution at an earlier date than 1929. Hence they were also not liked by Government and their wisdom with moderation was disliked by the masses who were awakened to political consciousness by Tilak and Das. The strange, enigmatic, and conquering politician in Gandhiji was about to retire into oblivion for the next five years. Although it was a fact that Gandhiji's meteoric rise was due to his unparalleled gift for organization, the self-centred multi-millionaires and mill-magnates were not less responsible for it. In the words of B. C. Pal: " Mr. Gandhi has not been helped to his unique influence in the country by merely the medieval Indian mind, but also by the more practical support that has come to him from the multi-millionaires and the mill-masters of his own province who have not been slow to recognize in him a very efficient instrument for advancing their own economic and financial interests. They have exploited him as he himself has, perhaps unconsciously, exploited them. In the coming Gandhi Raj, if the Gandhi movement succeeds, we shall have no democracy, but an

autocracy of the oriental type dominated by priestly influences and worked especially for the benefit of profiteering banias."[1] Did we realize this in 1950 ?

The Liberals were routed in the election of 1923. They lacked an organized party. The vociferous Das and Nehru occupied their places. Savarkar was willing to work the reforms. He always held that the movement for freedom should be launched from within and without !

[1] Quoted in *The Problem of Minorities* by K. B. Krishna, p. 167.



Yashodabai Savarkar



Ganeshpant *alias* Babarao Savarkar



The Savarkar Brothers



The Patit Pavan Temple



Seth Bhagoji Keer



Savarkar with his batch of Sanghatanists in Ratnagiri

CHAPTER IX

Social Revolution

I

Thus Savarkar was interned in Ratnagiri where the defeated and dethroned King Theba of Burma had perished. Two weeks after this memorable event of January 6, 1924, the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha was established ostensibly through the influence and attempts of Babarao Savarkar, but, in fact, inspired by Savarkar himself. The main object of the Sabha was to organize. consolidate and unite the Hindus into one organic whole and enable them to oppose effectively any unjust aggression ; thus while protecting their own cultural, religious and economic rights, the Hindus were to strive for the general welfare of mankind, universal compassion being the basic urge of Hinduism !

The first event of note that took place in the history of the Sanghatanist Party was the visit to Ratnagiri of Sri Shankaracharya in May 1924, during the celebration of the Shivaji Festival. The Sanghatanist Party utilised the great occasion for arousing people's enthusiasm for the Sanghatan movement. But at this juncture plague broke out in Ratnagiri and their work was hindered. Consequently Savarkar was allowed to shift to Nasik, the city which he had transformed into the Jerusalem of Indian revolutionaries. After 19 years of glorious struggle and long incarceration Savarkar's entry into the city was hailed with great enthusiasm by the people. As a token of their gratitude he was presented with a purse on behalf of Maharashtra. Dr. Moonje presided over the function and Sri N. C. Kelkar read out the address. Sri Shankaracharya sent his blessings on the occasion by presenting a holy garment to the great patriot. Expressing feelings of esteem, gratitude and love that Maharashtra cherished for Savarkar's heroic fortitude, sterling patriotism and untold sufferings in the cause of freedom, the address presented to Savarkar ended with the hope that Savarkar

would soon be a free man to carry on his mission in the country unrestricted and unhampered. Savarkar carried on his work for the uplift of the Hindu society in Nasik too. During his stay at Nasik, he rescued some Mahar Hindus from the snare of the Agakhani Mohammedans. He also visited Trimbak, Yeola and Nagar, and propagated his new Hindu Sanghatanist ideology among the people.

On his return from Nasik in the last week of November 1924, Savarkar devoted himself to public work and propagation of his ideal from the platform of the Ratnagiri Hindusabha which was then, as was the Hindu Mahasabha itself, a non-political body. The late Dr. M. G. Shinde, a sincere and staunch worker and devoted Savarkarite who stood by his leader through thick and thin, was Savarkar's chief lieutenant. Different men for different purposes were drawn to him. Some loved him, some protected him, some spread his ideology among the people, and others worked and toiled for him.

Sri Palukaka Joshi, a devotee, copied his master's manuscripts, his essays and dramas, articles and writings, and directed them to the proper places. The late Sri Nanal, a legal celebrity in the District, Rao Bahadur Parulekar, Rao Saheb Ranade, Sri Vishnupant Damle, Sri Wamanrao Chavan, Sri Patkar, Sri Achyutrao Malushte, Sri Narayanrao Khatu, Sri Haribhau Gandhi, Sri Dattatraya Savant, Sri Atmaramrao Salvi, Sri Keruji Mahar and a host of others were the pioneer workers in this movement launched by Savarkar.

Gradually Savarkar began to initiate the people into his new ideology through the Hindu Sabha. Afire with the new ideology the Hindus in Ratnagiri began to worship strength, consolidation, and unity. It was inevitable that such an unadulterated Hindu movement should upset the mental balance of the then peerless Gandhian pro-Muslim zealots. The breath of the movement was against the current fads and fashions in Indian politics passing under the good name of non-violence and truth. Worship of strength and love for the Machine age were taboo to the Gandhian faddists. Naturally the new cult of lathi irritated them much. They thought that the cult of lathi created communal disharmony. The Muslim opposition to this cult and ideology sprung from

the fear that the resultant force would be used against them. In reply, the Savarkarian group suggested to the apostles of the self-abnegation policy to cut their own hands lest they might strike the faces of the Muslims. Servile philosophy, the child of fear complex, being not in the blood of the Sanghatanists, they did not care for the objections of the faddists, nor did they care for the opposition of the fanatics. They believed that the real leaders of the Hindus were those, who had risen even in armed revolt against injustice, aggression and tyranny in any form! For the defence of their natural and national rights, the Sanghatanists said, they would not only use the force of lathi, but would also await the opportunity to utilise, if necessary, the fire and power of machine guns, submarines, aeroplanes and battleships.

In 1927 the question of playing music before mosque raised its ugly head in Ratnagiri too. In Turkey and many other European countries wherein Muslims live, there is neither ban nor objection to the playing of music in public places. That there should be an abundant and abiding respect for all creeds, faiths, and ways of life is the true key to universal happiness. But there must be a give and take on both sides. It is the duty of the followers of every faith to accommodate, conduce and contribute to the peace and progress of the world. Here in this case even conventionally and legally the Hindus were entitled to take their processions with music by the mosques; still the Muslims raised objection to these Hindu rights. So the situation grew tense. The Hindus took out their procession with great pomp and preparedness amidst this tension and excitement.

The Muslims appealed to the District Magistrate for "help". He rejected their appeal in these words: "I do not think that an amicable settlement is possible, as the Mohammedans under the influence of some undesirable advice allege that no procession ever passed the mosque with music in the past." The District Magistrate continued: "It is unfortunate that the question of music before the mosque has recently been the cause of so much trouble everywhere. The duty of the Executive is clear. It is to afford protection to the peaceful enjoyment of existing rights and customs to those entitled to it without fear or favour. I, therefore, agree with the District

Superintendent of Police that Mohammedans have no grounds for making these applications."[1] Obviously the struggle ended in a triumph for the Hindus. On this occasion Savarkar reiterated his views that force and fanaticism on the Muslim side would never solve this problem of music before the mosque; true understanding and due respect for the Hindu rights of citizenship on their part alone would mitigate the evil.

Soon after the decision of the authorities in the aforesaid episode, the Muslims exhibited placards in a procession declaring that they did not want Swaraj. The Sanghatanists said that Allah should read the placards and grant their prayer; for the Swaraj of the stamp of Kohat, Malabar and Gulbarga might never come into existence. The Hindus said: "Oh! friends, you never joined us on the platform, never accompanied us to the prisons, and never followed us to the gallows. What else will a reasonable man expect of you?" In spite of such an attitude, Savarkar every year on the days of Hindu festivals visited the Muslim and Christian quarters to promote good feelings between the Hindus and the other communities. On the occasion of the Dasara festival, accompanied by his co-workers, Savarkar distributed "gold leaves" among the Muslim and Christian citizens too. But these feelings were never reciprocated. The doctrine of false humility and degraded self-respect practised by Gandhist Hindus stood at the non-Hindu doors with offers of supplicant service. And the non-Hindus loved it more than genuine goodwill and self-respect displayed by Savarkar. Due regard for self and reasonable self-love constitute the basis of virtue. A man of sense and self-respect considers so!

The first and foremost battle on the home front as such Savarkar had with the Hindu orthodoxy or the Sanatanists was over the question of mixed-caste schools in the District. The orthodox Hindus opposed the idea tooth and nail. The School Board faltered and the District Board failed in its support.

So Savarkar carried on intense propaganda in favour of mixed schools through the press and from the platform, and appealed to the District and Provincial authorities for help

[1] Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha, *Five-Year Report*, p. 41.

against the forces of orthodoxy which denied the just, civic, human, and legitimate rights to the children of the untouchables to sit in public schools along with the caste-Hindu children. Attention of the Government also was drawn by Savarkar to the fact that the untouchables being as good tax-payers and citizens as the touchables, their children were entitled to the benefit of all public schools. It was also pointed out that those very orthodox Hindus did not feel any qualms of conscience in allowing the Christian and Muslim children to sit with their children in the schools.

Savarkar entreated the orthodox Hindus in an appealing tone not to treat their co-religionists worse than dogs and cats. "Can you prevent Christian children from attending public schools? No. You dare not. You know the consequences. The British Government will speak with bullets," he challenged. "You insult the untouchables, because they are ignorant and helpless; but you yield to the unjust demands of the Muslims because they are aggressive. When a Mahar becomes a Muslim or a Christian convert, you treat him as your equal. But as a Mahar he will not receive the same treatment. What a shame my countrymen!" he thundered.

Savarkar appealed to the District Magistrate to bring the rowdy elements to book and wrote to him in a moving tone: "I wish, sir, to enlist not only your legal protection as a Magistrate, but also your human sympathies as a gentleman, in the cause." It may seem strange that Savarkar should have written for help to the Government of those days. But it must be noted that Savarkar is always uncompromising with untruth and injustice, and not with men and power. The breath of his ideology is the hatred of oppression in every form, not of personalities and authorities. The virility and sincerity of Savarkar in this cause ultimately triumphed. The District Magistrate saw things for himself, and wrote the following remark during one of his visits to the schools: "It is the good result of Mr. Savarkar's lectures that the untouchable boys have been allowed to sit mixed and get their education without any invidious distinction being made in their case!"[1]

Then came another shock to orthodoxy! An untouchable

[1] Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha, *Five-Year Report*, p. 150.

teacher was transferred in 1928, to a school attended entirely by caste-Hindu children! The Sanatanists moved heaven and earth to get the order of the School Board rescinded, but to no purpose. The School Board threatened to close the school and the orthodox Hindus regained their civic sense! The effect was tremendous and historic. Due to this victory of Savarkar over orthodoxy and the establishment of rival mixed-caste schools by the Hindus, and consequently for want of new converts, the American Mission working in Ratnagiri had to wind up its activities, and its chief departed in despair! Thus ended the first battle at Ratnagiri against orthodoxy in a unique victory for Savarkar.

Shuddhi or the Reconversion movement, the main spring of Sanghatanism, was also inaugurated by Savarkar in Ratnagiri and was coming to a head despite heavy odds. The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha fought its way inch by inch until the Hindus came to realize the Movement's democratic support to the Indian unity, Indian peace and Indian prosperity in the peculiar situation obtaining in India. Reconversion adds to the strength and forces of nationalism and decreases the forces of communalism, disruption, and disorder. The movement holds forth immense pregnant possibilities.

The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha reconverted from the middle of 1926 and onwards several persons to the Hindu fold with prescribed religious ceremonials. The Christian missionaries were enraged at this; so they warned a certain boy, who was reconverted to Hinduism, not to pass by the mission quarters lest other boys should catch the contagious idea that converts could again become Hindus! The most difficult problem which arose from this reconversion movement was the marriage problem of the reconverted persons. The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha, in its early stage, had vigorously supported the marriage of Sri Tukojirao, Maharaja of Indore, with Miss Miller, an American lady, and even had expressed its readiness to arrange for a priest to perform the marriage ceremony. The Sabha in the beginning got two reconverted girls married to two Hindu gentlemen under the direction of Savarkar, who performed the marriage rites himself. Orthodoxy shook to its roots at this! Later, during Savarkar's internment, about two hundred persons were saved

from the clutches of non-Hindu Missions. Diseased and disabled Hindu children were reared up by some Sanghatanists and were prevented from being handed over to the non-Hindu forces. The main support of money and sympathy for the work of Sri Vinayak Maharaj Masurkar, while his reconversion movement was going on in Goa, came from Ratnagiri, the stronghold of Savarkarism.

The reconversion movement was a war. It really aimed at bringing the senseless to their senses! And a war with the Hindu orthodoxy was a war indirectly with the Maulavies and Missionaries. Displeased at the new movement of Reconversion, the Muslims and Missionaries lodged complaints against Savarkar with the District Magistrate, who happened to be a Muslim, charging Savarkar with creating communal disharmony and tension in the District. Out went a thundering rejoinder in the next month from the Ratnagiri Hindus into the hands of H.E. the Governor of Bombay, Sir Leslie Wilson, justifying the stand taken by Savarkar and the cause espoused by him. This neutralised and nullified the complaints of the opposite camps. Savarkar told the District Magistrate that if the movement of Reconversion created tension, why should the movement of Conversion also be not considered so? He emphasized that if at all anybody was to be held responsible for the tension, the Missionaries and Maulavies should be held so because they had started the conversion movement first. Reconversion followed the Conversion movement. Moreover, he added that his was not an aggressive or unjust movement carried on in the far-off corners of America or Turkey. He was doing sacred work in his own country, which had been exploited in her fallen days by foreign faiths. It was a strange attitude on the part of a Government that allowed robbers to commit robberies and prohibited the owners from protecting and defending their property! But in this unfortunate land those were the times when a politician like Mr. Mahomed Ali, who expressed his unholy desire to divide the Depressed Classes equally between Hindus and Muslims, from the Presidential Chair of the Indian National Congress, was eulogised as a patriotic and a nationalist leader! And at the same time the Reconversion movement was decried as anti-national and a force of

reactionarism, and its leaders from Shraddhananda to Lajpat Rai, and from Moonje to Savarkar, were decried as communalists and reactionaries by those so-called rationalists and 'super'-nationalists, who upheld and regarded the Khilafat Movement of a frankly religious and medieval colour as a glorious spectacle! Did not Mr. Yakub Hasan, while presenting an address to Gandhiji at Madras, openly enjoin upon the Mussalmans to convert all the untouchables in India to Islam?[1] And was he not in the eyes of the Congress more patriotic, progressive and a truer nationalist than Moonje or Parmananda? To the Congressmen the Khilafat leaders, who sent their congratulations to the Moplahs on their 'brave' fight for religion, were progressive and patriotic leaders!! Can there be any nationalism worse than this kind of deceptive and disruptive nationalism? The "communalism" of the Hindu Sanghatanists was righteous; because it was bred in self-defence; the "nationalism" of the upholders and supporters of the Khilafat was perverse, because it nourished anti-national feelings among the Muslims!!

II

The question of Temple Entry for the untouchables cropped up in 1925. The orthodox quarters were alarmed. They shouted that their Religion, God and Traditions were in danger. Their religion and traditions and customs welcomed an untouchable provided he became a Mohammad or a Minto. The orthodox touched animals like bullocks and buffaloes, could endure the presence of a dog or a cat in their houses, but not the presence of their co-religionist Hindu Mahars or Hindu Bhangis though they were human beings!! They feared that their sacred God would be polluted by the mere sight of a Hindu Bhangi! "He is not God who can be desecrated" went the epigrammatic Savarkarian reply to the orthodox. Savarkar holds that those men, who regard such inhuman faith as abhors the touch of a human being, and yet gladly touches animals like dogs and cats, are themselves a blot on humanity. It is they who are really fallen and not the "untouchables"! Removal of untouchability, therefore,

[1] *Young India*, dated 8-9-1920.

implies purification and salvation of such misguided orthodox touchables also !

Orthodoxy began to collapse under such ruthless arguments. To pull down the steel walls of orthodoxy, Savarkar started Pan-Hindu Ganesh festivals in 1925. He transformed the Ganesh Festival started by Tilak into a Pan-Hindu Festival. An untouchable was not allowed for ages within the precincts of the Hindu sanctuaries. By and by the question of temple entry was discussed with wisdom and vehemence during the days of Ganesh Festival. The untouchables were brought into the hall of the Vithoba Temple in Ratnagiri, the most important temple in the Ratnagiri District. Then in November 1929, took place an event of far-reaching consequences. All the city was agog. The City Magistrate was present by a special order to see that the proceedings of the public meeting, held in the Vithoba Temple of Ratnagiri to decide the question of the entry of the untouchables into the Vithoba Temple, came off peacefully.

The momentous meeting began. Savarkar's convincing speech swept away doubts, hesitation and misgivings which were lurking in the minds of the opponents.

The Magistrate himself having been carried off his feet by the force and faith of Savarkar's speech, forgot his entity, rose and exclaimed, " Now who and what remain to be convinced ? " None came forward. It was a unique triumph for Savarkar. Amidst flickering opposition and deafening exclamations, the untouchables entered the Vithoba Temple of Ratnagiri, step by step, singing gracefully and gratefully the glory of " one God, one goal, one language, one country and one Nation." With great feelings and devotional eyes the densely crowded meeting saw the historic spectacle, the first of its kind in the history of Hindusthan ! As the age-long sufferers followed their children who climbed the steps of the temple one by one, singing the song, their hearts throbbed, and eyes glowed. The song was specially composed in Marathi by Savarkar himself for the occasion ! It read :

The Impurity of ages is gone
Scripture-born stamp is torn
The age-long struggle is ended

The net of enemies shredded
The slave of ages hoary !
Now is a brother in glory !

The Bhageshwar Temple in the Ratnagiri Fort was also declared open to all Hindus at a meeting held under the chairmanship of Shrimat Shankaracharya, the religious head of the Hindus. Sri Shankaracharya was garlanded on the occasion by a Hindu Bhangi as the representative of the Ratnagiri Hindus. The scene was reminiscent of the first Shankaracharya, who had embraced centuries ago a pantheist untouchable while returning from his bath in the Ganges !

A Pan-Hindu band was trained and it replaced the non-Hindu bands. The Hindu band attended festivals and functions. Women of Ratnagiri performed to the shock of Maharashtra and Hindusthan their *Haldi-Kumkum* ceremony on a Pan-Hindu basis. During the Pan-Hindu Ganpati festivals a Bhangi Hindu sang Vedic hymns and *Gayatri Mantram*, the sacred privilege enjoyed so far by the Brahmins alone. The incident echoed throughout India. The *Times of India*, Bombay, styled it as a sacrilegious prize. The event resounded through some London papers too ! On another occasion a Bhangi family needed a priest for a marriage ceremony. The Mahar Hindus being the Brahmins of the Bhangis, their priest declined to perform the ceremony. The Hindu Sabha thereupon sent a Brahmin priest, and he performed the ceremony.

Soon the movement gained ground and grew gradually popular. While the struggle for opening temples to the untouchables was forging ahead, Savarkar was thinking of having a Pan-Hindu Temple with a view to giving an impetus to the temple entry movement. He held that the youths trained in the new ideology would throw open the doors of the remaining temples to the untouchables when they would become trustees of the temples. So he approached Seth Bhagoji Baloji Keer, the famous temple-builder of Maharashtra, who fervently believed that Savarkar's inspiration was God's call ! He summarily and spontaneously silenced Savarkar's opponents by telling them that Savarkar's name was Vinayak and Vinayak was the name of God Ganapati ! In

deference to Savarkar's wishes Seth Bhagoji built in February 1931 a magnificent temple known as the *Patit Pavan Temple* in Ratnagiri wherein all Hindus irrespective of caste could assemble for prayers. This was an epoch-making achievement of Savarkarian movement. This monumental Pan-Hindu temple was the first to stand in the history of Hindusthan open for Pan-Hindu worship, Pan-Hindu functions and Pan-Hindu propaganda. An event of new hope, new era, new light, and new history !

The opening ceremony of the temple came off on a grand scale. Acharyas, Shankaracharyas, pundits and patriots declared Ratnagiri a place of pilgrimage. In fact, as one speaker then put it, Ratnagiri became the new *Kashi* of the re-awakened, purified and unified Hindudom where a Hindu scavenger acted as a priest, persons from the so-called Depressed Classes delivered *Kathas*, Mahars read the sacred Gita, Brahmins garlanded and bowed themselves before these priests and *kathekaries*; and Brahmin youths conducted a Pan-Hindu Hotel. Indeed, the *Patit Pavan Temple* came to be the university of the Pan-Hindu Movement.

Prohibition of one caste from dining with another was the keystone upon which the arch of the caste system mainly rested. Savarkar decided to strike a fatal blow at this keystone. He contemplated inter-caste Pan-Hindu dinners. As usual orthodox Hindus opposed the idea vehemently. Savarkar, however, silenced their learned spokesmen by throwing at their faces extracts from their own scriptures and Holy Works that sang that God Krishna dined with Vidura, a son born of a maid-servant, and that their great Brahmin Rishi, Durvasa, dined along with his numerous disciples at the Pandavas' who were Kshatriyas ! Yet, it was not easy to hold a Pan-Hindu dinner. The movement developed gradually from private quarters to public places. And then came off the first public Pan-Hindu dinner popularly known all over India as *Sahabhojan*, in a theatre in 1930. This was the acid test to know who were the real seasoned reformers and who were seasonal. What a horrifying event it was in the eyes of old traditions ! Upto this time even the beggars recoiled from touching the food of the Pan-Hindu dinner. Mahars refused to eat with the Bhangis

and Bhangis with the Dhors. The Depressed Classes desired to eat with the caste-Hindus but not with the different sub-classes from amongst themselves. Onlookers thronged to see the neo-function, and Ratnagiri was the subject of headlines all over India.

In its "current topics" the *Times of India*, Bombay, writing on the subject, observes in its issue of December 9, 1930: "This all-caste dinner was celebrated in a unique manner—a manner that has given deep offence to Nationalist Congressmen, who are mostly believers along with Mr. Gandhi in four watertight castes by birth. For, at Ratnagiri some enthusiastic reformers, who regarded caste system as the bane of Hinduism, held an all-caste dinner which was attended by Brahmins, Banias, Chambhars, Mahars and Bhangis!" Styling it as a bold creed, the writer goes on: "What is still more interesting, the spirit of this splendid essay in practical reform, Mr. V. D. Savarkar, delivered a speech in which he flung into the teeth of orthodoxy the daring credo of his party. 'From today I shall not believe in highness or lowness of caste. I shall not oppose the intermarriage between the highest and lowest castes. I shall eat with any Hindu irrespective of caste. I shall not believe in caste by birth or by profession and henceforth I shall call myself a Hindu only—not Brahmin, Vaishya, etc.'"

Savarkar incessantly preached: "Eat with anybody. Eat anything that is medically fit and clean. That does not deprive you of your religion. Remember the root of religion is not the dish or the stomach, but the heart, soul and the blood!" The names of those persons, who took part in the all-caste dinners, were published in newspapers to the surprise and shock of their orthodox relations!

The first week of the opening ceremony of the *Patit Pavan* Temple saw the biggest of such Pan-Hindu Dinners in India. The reactions to the Pan-Hindu dinner were tremendous. Acharyas took to their heels and saints went head over heels. Cow-worshippers thought it beneath their dignity to honour human beings and eat with men who were their co-religionists! There were some who did everything else for the movement, but declined to eat with all classes. Their heads agreed, but hearts disagreed! At last their dilemma was solved, when

Savarkar, who held that social reforms settled down more permanently if they were effected with full consideration and conciliation, accepted a compromise which allowed the *no-changers* to take their dinner by sitting not in the line with the revolutionary reformists, but in another row facing them. Orthodoxy clamoured and raised a hue and cry in the city! Rumours were afloat in the neighbouring villages that the all-caste dinner would cost the reformers dear and that a rift was visible in the ranks of the reformers.

When the beggars saw lawyers, leaders, Divans, merchants, doctors, big and respectable men of all castes sharing food in a communion, they, too, expressed their willingness to accept the Pan-Hindu food which they had declined to accept on the previous occasion! But now Savarkar would not offer them the food unless they also sat in one and the same row irrespective of castes. And ultimately they did so! At last Pan-Hindu sense and mentality came to stay. Karmaveer V. R. Shinde, a great social reformer of the Deccan, rejoiced to see what his D. C. Mission aimed at was both preached and practised in Ratnagiri. Overwhelmed with grateful tears, he acclaimed Savarkar as the real *Patit Pavan* of the Hindus, the saviour of the fallen and trodden. It was a noble appreciation and correct assessment of a great achievement! Some leaders, who witnessed the practical reforms, called Savarkar *Sanghatanacharya*—Master-brain at organisation—and others described him as their *Shankaracharya*, the supreme head of *New Hinduism*!

Every revolution has its convulsions and revelations. Defeated at all other points orthodox Hindus and non-Hindus now threatened Savarkar's life. In many families dissensions arose. Unpleasant words were said and heard between sons and fathers, wives and husbands. Harsh gestures were exchanged between friends, and estrangement rankled amongst relations. Newly married girls were forbidden to see the faces of their reformist parents, brothers or relatives. A married girl in one case perished in her illness despite her father's fervent entreaties to her father-in-law to send her to him for medical treatment. The father of the girl was asked to withdraw his support and devotion to Savarkarian ideology, but he did not yield!

Half-hearted reformists were trapped and they repented in sack-cloth and ashes. If some one from Savarkar's camp fell ill, whispers and vilification would attribute the illness or misfortune to God's wrath; and Savarkar would retort that even his cat was still unaffected. All the while Savarkar infused courage into the minds of his followers with his undying dictum: "Reform implies always a minority, custom means a majority. Have undeviating faith in your mission and courage of conviction, and you will successfully overcome the forces of reactionaries!"

III

This was the model moulded in a District-wide movement of Savarkarian Revolution which echoed throughout Hindusthan and had its reverberations even in the London papers. Savarkar succeeded where prophets, philosophers and emperors had failed. A man who had to rot for fourteen youthful years in the most dreadful jail and again was interned for over another thirteen years in Ratnagiri and was forbidden to participate publicly or privately in any political activities, had worked this miracle. All this happened a considerable time before Gandhiji made the Harijan uplift one of the chief planks of his activities!

Savarkar's approach to untouchability, the age-long corroding current of evil, and his potent remedy and method for its abolition were as rational and constructive as they were fearless, fundamental and far-reaching. There had been in the past rationalists like Agarkar, and institutions like the Arya Samaj, the Brahmo Samaj and the Prarthana Samaj working for that cause. Later, there followed also the great personality of Gandhiji in the field. There were some showy, touchy, and fashionable learned men who expressed lip sympathy in spotless diction for the Depressed Classes in order to please and show the ruling bosses their radical views! But Savarkar's angle of vision fundamentally differed from those of such institutions and personalities. Western ideas of Equality, Fraternity and Liberty dominated the motives of the rationalist group led by Ranade. Revolt against orthodox Hinduism and re-orientalization of Hinduism were the objects of

the Arya Samaj ; electicism was the aim of the Brahmo Samaj and Prarthana Samaj. Agarkar was an unbridled rationalist, a lonely giant. He had no genius for constructive work. The Arya Samajists compromised their prophet's stand by mixing their identity with the Gandhian principles, lost sight of its political impact, and lost their vitality, fervour, and firmness ! Though Gandhiji believed in the caste system, he wanted to remove untouchability. But his Harijan movement was anything but Hindu, though the money for the cause came mainly from the Hindus

Gandhiji never raised his little finger against the proselytizing greed of the Maulavies and Missionaries and observed reticence about it ! But even then it was his fortune that he received wreaths for his work for the Depressed Classes while Savarkar faced the wrath of all non-Hindu missionaries ! Like all positive and powerful reformers, Savarkar wielded the force, construction and hammer of Luther ! And a Luther is not born for laurels. Savarkar's one aim was to purge Hinduism of its most baneful superstitions and orthodox bigotry. His reformative zeal did not aim at the denunciation of Hinduism. He strove for its revival in the light of modern times and to ensure its survival. That was why he was offensive inside and defensive outside. He aimed at moulding the different castes of the Hindus into a classless Hindu society in which all Hindus would be by birth socially, economically and politically equal ! Rational, nationalistic and revolutionary in outlook, his ideology was as deep-rooted as it was far-reaching, and looked to the prosperity and peace of the Hindu society, Hindu life, Hindusthan and ultimately universal welfare. His was not the work of a fashionable reformer, or a showy rationalist, or a wordy humanist. His was a mission for a great cause for the emergence of Hindusthan as a world power to play her destined part in the comity of nations.

Two decades ago he admonished the Hindus to break off the seven shackles that hindered the progress of the Hindu society. He fought for temple entry, popularised Pan-Hindu dinners, naturalised Shuddhi-reconversion, annihilated the belief in highness and lowness of birth, favoured intercaste marriages, and ridiculed the injunctions on caste-ridden

vocations and sea-voyage. The power and faith of the Savarkarian movement depended for its vitality and goal upon the elixir of Shuddhi and Science which hold the key not only to Indian peace and prosperity, but also to the destinies of the Middle East and Far East, the one-time tributaries of Hindu life! In one of his songs he visualized that the Hindus after achieving freedom would liberate all subject nations under the sun, and would help them establish love, equality and peace for the progress of humanity. And it was towards this end that all his Sanghatanist movement was directed. Savarkar preached and worked for the abolition of untouchability with unparalleled success when few of his great contemporaries were thinking of the removal of the untouchability, and a majority of them had not gauged its significance.

Restricted in his activities, shadowed by spies, Savarkar thus shelled one of the strongest holds of the Hindu orthodoxy in India. For this signal achievement he applied the battery of his oratory, poured in his volcanic energy, utilized the fund of his resourceful erudition and the flow of his volcanic pen. He used platform, press, examination centres, theatres, circus-tents, festivals, fares and functions for popularizing the Movement, and whipped the people into a revolt. The forces of conservatism and orthodoxy tottered before his powerful personality, and the bees that had nestled in the barriers of the caste system tried to fling their poisonous stings into his body, but failed. For, every Luther is born with an impenetrable armour!

The revolution in the Ratnagiri District was an unparalleled success; so much so that Karmaveer Shinde, hearing the news of Savarkar's unconditional release in May 1937, remarked that had Savarkar's activities been restricted to social revolution only, he would have banished untouchability altogether from the face of India within five years. Worthy was the glowing tribute and noble appreciation made by a writer in a special issue of Dr. Ambedkar's *Janata* that Savarkar's service to the cause of the untouchables was as decisive and great as that of Gautama Buddha himself. Sri Kakasahib Barve, his contemporary, and President, Maharashtra Provincial Harijan Sevak Sangh, in his Presidential Address at a Conference at Sangli, in July 1945, expressed

the view that had Savarkar continued his intense work in the cause of the removal of untouchability, his contribution would have given a tremendous impetus to the movement!

Thus it can be seen that the vitality of Lord Buddha, who raised a revolt against untouchability, the virility of Shivaji, who purposefully hammered its corners that lay in his way, the vigour of Dayananda, who strove to bury it, are all crystallized in the revolutionary philosophy of Savarkar whose approach to the problem was predominantly political and fundamentally social.

IV

Savarkar's propaganda was not one-sided. With a batch of his workers, he visited the slums and squalid dens, hamlets and hills, villages and towns where the untouchables lived. This batch studied their ways of living, taught them cleanliness, guided them, and worshipped with them. They took the Chambhars into the quarters and temples of the Mahars and the Bhangis into the quarters and temples of the Dhors.

The discussions and debates with opponents over the burning problem of Shuddhi-Reconversion and Hindu organisation stormed and abated. Stirring speeches and moving appeals would go on till early dawn. The next morning saw Savarkar in another village and so his propaganda went on. Savarkar was then in the best of his health. Men of wealth, distinction and status followed him climbing zig-zag distances and dales with cheer. In fact, all the Indian leaders, whose names are connected with the removal of untouchability, have not seen as many quarters of the untouchables as Savarkar has done. The suppressed humanity watched and sat far into the night with bewilderment and hope, and crowded for the *darshan* of Savarkar, the Saviour of the fallen Hindus, who opened to them the gates of the Temples of God, Man and Light!

Savarkar also attended and presided over the conferences of the so-called untouchables. In June 1929 he was received with great ovation at Malvan in the southern part of the Ratnagiri District, where he presided over the Conference of the Depressed Classes of the Konkan Division. The Conference sang Vedic hymns in a body. Savarkar distributed the

sacred threads among the so-called untouchable Hindus and declared amid great applause : " A battle royal has been raging for the last seven generations over the right of studying the *Vedas*. Here are the *Vedas*. Here is the sacred *thread*. Take these two. Is that all ? Even non-Hindus read the *Vedas*. Why should not the Hindu Mahars read them ? The feud over this problem was a useless task. Let us expiate the sins we committed. We are all responsible for our political subjugation. That is the past. Now let us declare on oath that we shall rectify our past blunders and win back our weal, wealth and glory." Sri P. N. Rajbhoj, a volatile leader of the Depressed Classes from Poona, who was present at the Conference, observed : " I was really sceptical of the Savarkarian movement at the beginning. My contact and discussions with Barrister Savarkar and my personal observation have thoroughly convinced me of its far-reaching effect. I am extremely rejoiced to declare that this famous leader of the political revolutionaries is also an out and out social revolutionist ! "

Another notable Conference was held in the *Patit Pavan* Temple at Ratnagiri just after the temple was opened during the last week of February 1931, under the aegis of the D.C. Mission led by Karmaveer V. R. Shinde. This was the Mission's Sixth Annual Session and was presided over by Savarkar. All the workers and leaders of the D.C. Mission and other leaders of the so-called Depressed Classes were thrilled to survey the achievement of this Savarkarian movement. One after another they acknowledged gratefully that their dreams were brought into reality by Savarkar in Ratnagiri. They repeated that if the atmosphere of Ratnagiri captivated all the parts of India, there would be no untouchability left in the land.

A third Conference was held on April 26, 1931. It was the Ratnagiri District Somavanshiya Mahar Conference. Savarkar presided over it. It was attended by hundreds of Mahars from all corners of the District. The Mahars had poured in the city as they heard that '*Pandhari*' was shifted to Ratnagiri where they were allowed to enter the temple and worship God—an unbelievable thing for them—a thing for which they had pined for ages !

Savarkar's teachings and message to the untouchables were appealing. He asked them to live a simple life, and to shed their inherent inferiority complex. He admonished them: "Your weakness is worse than the wickedness of the caste Hindus. For your own welfare you must also suffer with fortitude and faith. You want rights, but you are not prepared to pay the price. Be men. Know that you are men. If someone scolds you for your proximity on the public road, tell him that the public road is not the property of his father. Do not abandon your occupations. Stick to them and improve them. Every occupation has its value. Live a clean and temperate life. Never disown your fathers, saints, and blood. Do not observe untouchability among yourselves. Always treat with equality and kindness all the sub-castes amongst your own so-called Depressed Classes. That is also your duty. Forget it not!"

Savarkar sounded a warning to the extremist leaders of the so-called untouchables in particular, who wished to have Brahmin girls in marriages for untouchable youths. Savarkar considered this view to be mistaken, extravagant, and unjustifiable. To break off the barrier of caste system, he observed, in respect of marriages did not mean compulsory and forced marriages. According to him many things besides caste governed matrimonial alliances. "If a Hindu girl," he wrote, "selects as her husband any Hindu youth who does not belong to her caste or vice versa and if the couple is otherwise fit for matrimony the marriage should not be condemned, nor the couple be regarded as outcast on that account alone!" As for the marriage of a Hindu with a non-Hindu, he was opposed to it if it took place without bringing the partner into the Hindu fold. According to him such a precaution was necessary for the collective good of the Hindu Nation.

Savarkar's love of Hindu religion was not narrow-minded either. He said: "When a non-Hindu worships or a Mohammedan merges into humanity melting his religious *libido*, the Hindus, too, shall dissolve their separate entity." "Till then," Savarkar observed, "it is necessary that the Hindus should be within their bonds. It is against the creed of humanity itself, if we ignore stark realities of life."

To the so-called caste Hindus his piece of advice was that they should be prepared to adopt even the pursuit of sweepers. There should be no monopoly in any field. He advised the non-Brahmins to administer to their own religious and sacramental life themselves and told them that there was no need of an authorised intermediary between them and God. "The moment you resolve not to invite the *Bhat* (Brahmin) to perform religious functions, Bhatshahi collapses like a pack of cards," he wrote. Learning and expounding the scriptures or sacerdocy should not be the monopoly of one particular class. Prestige and authority should be justified by individual achievement and not by caste, he opined. Priests, irrespective of caste, should be certified as are our doctors, asserted Savarkar.

V

Savarkar's life in Ratnagiri was full of other activities also. It was in Ratnagiri that the famous Pan-Hindu anthem was composed by him and was first sung. Ratnagiri is the birth-place of the Pan-Hindu Flag which was first flown by Sri Ramananda Chatterjee, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha at its Surat session in 1929, and was ultimately adopted by the All-India Hindu Mahasabha as the Pan-Hindu Flag at Lahore in 1936. It was the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha that remembered and sent its grateful homage to Nepal then the only Independent Hindu Kingdom in the world and appealed to her to make her arm stronger for the sake of Hindudom. It was the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha again that declared Nagari script and Sanskritised Hindi to be the National Script and Lingua Franca of Hindusthan!

Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha did a tremendous work in the cause of Swadeshi also. Savarkar and his colleagues visited the market places, lanes and by-lanes, and sent children selling and propagating *Swadeshi* articles as hawkers do. Savarkar himself saw individually every shop-keeper, entreated and insisted on the purchase of *Swadeshi* goods like soap, sugar, bangles, paper and many other articles of Indian make. One can easily imagine what amount of humiliation, exhausting patience and personal pecuniary loss Savarkar must have

undergone at the hands of insolent, illiterate and even so-called progressive but unpatriotic countrymen!

It was again Savarkar who attracted with great persuasion the Hindus to the trade of *Bed-making*. To that end he himself learnt the art of carding cotton with the carding-bow. He then induced Hindu youths to follow the vocation and thus the Ratnagiri Hindus had beds prepared by Hindus.

The most vociferous and effective was the movement launched for the purification of the Marathi language. The question had been agitating great minds for decades. But it was left to Savarkar to crown the movement with triumph. Shivaji had set up a committee to compile a Dictionary of pure Marathi words. The *Rajyavyavaharkosh* was compiled by Raghunath Pandit and others appointed by Shivaji the Great. The rise of the English Language added to the difficulties of Marathi which had been, to a great extent, already influenced by the Urdu and Persian languages. A nation must keep its mother tongue alive, its cherished heritage undefiled, its values and connotation unaffected. In the life of every nation the problem of purification of its language does arise. There has been a growing desire for the original and native forms of mother-speech in England too. Stating that there should be as much reverence and affection for one's native tongue as for the country and home, Frank H. Callan, author of *Excellence in English*, observes: "As we naturally and rightly resent and stand against all foreign incursions that may injure and corrupt the land of our birth and the scene of our infancy and childhood, desiring nothing so much as to preserve their integrity and familiar attractiveness, so in like manner we ought to guard nothing more jealously than the primitive purity and individuality of our language." [1]

Mr. Callan tells us that Defoe was against Latinized syntax and style of English. Swift employed his genius to resist Gaelic foreign tendencies in English prose. Gibbon was saturated with French; Johnson gave undue preference to Latin; and Carlyle was full of German constructions. All the three, says Callan, impeded the movement.[2] Lamb played an important role in the purification of the English language and Dryden

[1] Frank H. Callan, *Excellence in English*, p. 370.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 383.

and Shakespeare were pure English writers. So was Newman.

Ireland's great movement for the revival and resurrection of her mother tongue and its purification is too well-known.

In India the flag of the momentous movement of purification of the language was unfurled by Savarkar. Savarkar was against Urduised and Persianised Hindi or Marathi, as they eliminated Marathi and Hindi synonyms and impoverished the Marathi and Hindi Languages. He, therefore, launched a movement for the purification of the Marathi language. Battles were joined on the issue. After an untiring campaign the rational and national importance was realized and some of the opponents turned into its supporters. Some spineless ones conceded the principle, but fastidiously higgled about the details. Some came to respect it, and still a few croak against it.

But the Maharashtra Literary Conference at its Jalgaon Session accepted the principle of purification of the Marathi language. Dr. Patwardhan, D.Lit., a great Marathi poet, was first enamoured of foreign words. But when he was convinced of the righteousness of Savarkar's stand, he re-wrote his poetry in undefiled Marathi! Such was the glow of Savarkar's movement. New words were coined. Dictionaries of pure Marathi words to substitute Urdu and Persian words were compiled and published by Bhide Guruji and Dr. Patwardhan. The words gained ground and public sanction. The critics, too, unwittingly influenced by the psychology, are helping the movement by using the new words, and thus the purification of Marathi has come to stay.

Savarkar did not stop here. His movement was essentially an All-India urge. Hence he suggested that all those, who stood for pure Hindi and for the preservation of the purity of the Indian languages, should meet in an All-India Conference to devise ways and means, and launch a nation-wide movement for the purity of the Hindi and other languages. Savarkar also suggested reforms in the Devanagari script and reduced it to fifty-six letters for the convenience of the press. In respect of the Nagari script, he made an appeal to all provincial newspapers to print in every issue at least two columns of matter in their provincial languages in the Nagari

script. If all the provincial languages of India are printed in the Nagari script, what immense cohesion, understanding and advancement will be achieved! It is said that Dr. Ambedkar holds the same view on the subject. It has been the characteristic of great Maharashtrians that they never disagreed on fundamentals, although they might have differed in degree. Tilak, Gokhale, Kelkar and Ambedkar all exhibited ultimate unity in essentials and liberty in non-essentials. Their objects were one, though their means at times differed. The movement of the purification of language scored its triumph when Hindi with Devanagari script was adopted by the Constituent Assembly of India as the Lingua Franca of India in preference to Hindusthani, another name of Urdu.

Savarkar's stay in Ratnagiri attracted several pundits and patriots of all-India fame. One of the early visitors to Savarkar in Ratnagiri was the great founder of the R.S.S., Dr. K. B. Hedgewar. The interview took place in 1925 at Shirgaon, a village on the outskirts of Ratnagiri. Savarkar's monumental work Hindutva giving ideas of the fundamentals of Hindu Nationalism and Hindu State had just appeared on the scene and captivated and inspired many great brains and great hearts. Before starting the volunteer organisation known as the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh, Dr. Hedgewar had a long discussion with Savarkar over the faith, form and future of the organisation. A great Hindu leader and an unbending upright nationalist, Dr. Hedgewar wanted to conserve and direct the energy of Hindu youths towards all-round uplift of the Hindu Nation. After the collapse of the Non-co-operation Movement of Gandhiji and the fiasco of the Khilafat Movement, the country lay prostrate and chaos and confusion reigned in the student world. In the wake of this confusion and in consultation with Savarkar and others, Hedgewar decided to build up an organisation to supply the Hindu society with power and pillars.

During his visit to Bombay in September 1924, Savarkar came across Maulana Shaukat Ali. The Muslim leader paid glowing tribute to Savarkar for his patriotism and sacrifice, but he said that he disliked Savarkar's Hindu Sanghatan ideology, and wished that it should be stopped. Thereupon

Savarkar asked the Muslim leader to stop his Khilafat Movement first if he wanted him to stop Hindu Sanghatan Movement. Shaukat Ali replied that the Khilafat Movement was the breath of his nostrils. Savarkar told him that as long as there were separate organisations for the Muslims and the movement of conversion was carried on by them, so long the movement of Hindu Sanghatan and the propaganda for reconversion would go on unabated. Then the Muslim leader told Savarkar that the Muslims had many other countries and they would leave India, if inevitable. Savarkar at once answered back, "O quite freely. Why do you wait? The Frontier Mail is daily running towards that direction!" Shaukat Ali was now quite nervous. While taking Savarkar's leave, he cut a joke to make up the loss he suffered in arguments with Savarkar. With a bitter tone he said he was a giant and Savarkar was a dwarf and that he could punch Savarkar easily. "Here," said Savarkar sharply, "I am not disinclined to accept your challenge! Come on! You know Shivaji was also a dwarf before the giant Afzulkhan. They had a meeting! And everybody knows what was the history afterwards." The Muslim leader lost his face and stepped out.

Here is one of the most important interviews Savarkar had during his internment. Gandhiji saw Savarkar in March 1927 at the latter's residence in Ratnagiri. It was after nearly eighteen years that Gandhiji was now meeting his old opponent of London days. However of different stamps, the great ones recognise great forces. The real object of Gandhiji was to see whether the revolutionary volcano was now extinct, or a spent force, or still burning. During the course of the interview, Gandhiji told Savarkar with a pleasant smile that he would have stayed with Savarkar in Ratnagiri, the birthplace of Tilak, and the abode of Savarkar, for a day or two had his programme been not already fixed. Savarkar replied that he would have also been glad to entertain him, but agreed that Gandhiji should go on with his great mission of arousing the nation's enthusiasm for the Freedom Movement, as Gandhiji was fortunately free to do so. Then the problem of Shuddhi was discussed and the conversation between the two leaders ran as follows:—

SAVARKAR: Well, what are your views on Shuddhi?

GANDHIJI : To me the view that a man loses his religion is absurd.

SAVARKAR : In a way you are right. But as our caste system and tradition have laid down that under certain circumstances a man loses his religion, it is necessary to set the matter right by adopting such remedies and rites as would enable us to restore the reconverted man to his society. What is the harm in doing such a thing ? Both the society and the new-comer thereby get mental satisfaction.

GANDHIJI : I have no objection. It will do no harm if you have such a ceremony. But although I believe in reconversion of a person, who was forcibly or deceitfully converted to an alien faith, I am not for reconversions of persons whose ancestors have changed faiths decades ago. Nor do I uphold the conversions of persons from other religions. Because I believe that it is better to die while observing one's own religion than to embrace other religion. None should be persuaded to change his or her faith. It should be left to the will of the person.

SAVARKAR : Yes, after weighing carefully what is good for the betterment of one's own happiness, a man should decide the means. That is freedom of thought. The message of Hinduism is practical as well as spiritual, passive as well as active. It says on the one hand that it is better to die under the domain of one's own religion, and on the other, that it is better to transform the world into an Aryan Religion.

GANDHIJI : The aim of both of us is the same. We both strive for the glory of Hinduism and Hindusthan.

Gandhiji was now doubly sure that the faith and fire in Savarkar was unaffected even by the tortures and tribulations of the jail life in the Andamans. This was the last talk between Gandhiji and Savarkar. Though Savarkar was released afterwards in 1937, and made a whirlwind propaganda through the length and breadth of India as the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha, no occasion arose for a meeting between the two leaders.

Dr. Ambedkar, who had been to Ratnagiri in connection with a law suit, had a talk with Savarkar. Savarkar had

arranged for a public meeting, but on a telegraphic message from Bombay, Dr. Ambedkar left for Bombay. Young leaders of the spirit and heroic stamp of Sri Achyutrao Patwardhan showed deep regard for Savarkar. During the blooming days of the Civil Disobedience Movement of 1930 he discussed some points with Savarkar. When the young khadi-clad leader doubted the possibility of regaining Independence by an armed rising, Savarkar asked the charkha-general, "Then friend, tell me how you are going to win back the independence by charkha!"

Senpati Bapat's visit to Ratnagiri was memorable. Though Bapat had been to Ratnagiri to preside over the Ratnagiri District Political Conference, he refused to attend any work regarding the Conference before he had paid his respects to Savarkar. And Bapat clung to Savarkar as devotionally as Bharat embraced Ramachandra in the exile. Bapat then opened the book of his life before his leader since the days of his voluntary exile and the transportation of his leader, Savarkar. It was in Ratnagiri that Sri N. C. Kelkar agreed with Savarkar and promised to introduce part of Savarkar's reforms in the Devanagari script, and well did he fulfil his promise when he started his new Monthly, *Sahyadri*. Dr. Moonje, too, paid a visit to Ratnagiri. His regard for Savarkar approached reverence. Some years after he even told a Viceroy that to him Savarkar was next to Shivaji. Bhai Parmananda's visit to Ratnagiri was more of a personal character than a public one. Savarkar's right-hand man of London days, Sri V. V. S. Aiyer, met him in Ratnagiri after fifteen years. Sri Gyanchand Varma of London fame, Sri Sachindranath Sanyal, Sri Nani Gopal of Andaman fame, Sri G. V. Mavlankar, now Speaker of the Indian Parliament, Dr. Madhavrao Patwardhan, D.Lit., Dr. Ketkar, encyclopædist of Maharashtra, too, paid their respects to Savarkar at Ratnagiri.

The Chitpavan (Brahmin) Vidyarthi Sahayyak Sangh requested Savarkar to address their annual meeting. Savarkar told them that he could not join an institution, which stood purely for a particular caste. He added that he would accept their invitation provided they adopted a change in their constitution to the effect that in the absence of a worthy

Chitpavan Brahmin student, any deserving Hindu student would be awarded the scholarship. They did so and Savarkar agreed. Once at Malvan, a town in the southern part of the District, one 'Humanist' asked him whether he would like to be a member of his 'Human Religion!' A broad-minded Hindu as he was, he replied in the affirmative, and asked if there was really such a force as 'Human Religion' under the sun when a State like Russia invested with a universal urge was extending its frontiers and desiring to bomb the workers of other countries. Savarkar always likes to be a realist rather than a man of clouds even at the risk of being branded as a communalist.

Among the other leaders, who visited and interviewed Savarkar in Ratnagiri, the only man who impressed Savarkar most was Dr. Ketkar. That is why while paying an obituary tribute to Dr. Ketkar's memory in the literary circle at Ratnagiri in 1937, Savarkar marvelled at the fathomless brains in the small skull of the Doctor! A lion alone stops at a lion!

Mr. Yusuf Meher Ali then in the shell of Socialism saw Savarkar in Ratnagiri and to his bewilderment Savarkar took him to the inside of the *Patit Pavan Mandir*, the Pan-Hindu temple. It was no wonder that rationalist Savarkar should do so.

The visit of the President of the All-India Gurkha League, Sri Thakur Chadan Singh, to Ratnagiri along with a representative of the Royal Family of Nepal was most rousing and thrilling. It was the outcome of the contact established by the Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha with Nepal. It was significant that it was the Maharashtrian statesmanship that viewed the importance of Nepal on the political and physical map of India with great concern. It is well-known now that Tilak had deputed his lieutenant Kakasahib Khadilkar to Nepal in 1903 to open an arms factory there. Khadilkar began his work under the guise of some mercantile pursuit, but his project was scented by the British Government, and Khadilkar was compelled to return to Poona without accomplishing his object.

It was very strange that the Congress, which fought for Turkey's Khilafat and sent a few bottles of medicine to Chiang Kai Shek in China and a few bushels of grain to Communist Spain, should deliberately neglect Nepal, a State so much

interested in India's destiny and geographically, religiously and culturally a part and parcel of India. Nay, the Congressites considered it nothing less than a foreign State.

The importance and impact of the Gurkha leader's visit to Ratnagiri did not escape the British Government's vigilance. Savarkar was asked by the Home Department, Bombay, to submit his explanation and to communicate the speech he made at the time of the reception of the Gurkha leader. He did it and nothing came out of it. However, Savarkar was finally warned that his explanation was not satisfactory and that any further breach of the conditions imposed upon him would compel Government to make him undergo the remaining period of his transportation—about 37 years, if he referred to politics publicly or privately! Government demanded similar explanations from Savarkar on many other occasions. Every speech of Savarkar was reported to the Home Department, Bombay, through the District Magistrate. On important occasions Savarkar dictated the summary of his important speeches to the District Magistrate as a precaution. The mere word 'Swaraj' or 'Raj' in his article or speech was highly resented by the British Government and many a time he was threatened with dire consequences. To return to the Gurkha leader's visit. The Gurkha leader was tremendously impressed by Savarkar. Hearing and seeing Savarkar, the Gurkha leader said: "I have now come to realise what Napoleon must have been!"

And indeed Napoleon and Savarkar, the inveterate enemies of the British Empire, suffered the greatest humiliation and mental and physical torments at the hands of the British Power than any other adversary of the British Power which squandered crores on Napoleon and lakhs on Savarkar to crush their undying personalities to a slow torturous death. But undaunted, heroic and invincible as both these heroes were, they worked and struggled with wrath and righteousness for the downfall of the British Empire. In fact, Savarkar had the fortune to see the sun set on the British Empire and in the end his country free and independent!

CHAPTER X

Rationalist and Author

I

Modern civilization is the outcome of scientific research and progress. Science and Democracy are two great potential forces in the modern world. Democracy defines the shape and aims of social and political endeavour. It strives for a good, just, equitable and progressive life. Good and progressive life demands an equal and proportionately just enjoyment of all the material and cultural resources and possession. Those possessions and resources are brought within the reach of men by science which controls the laws and forces of Nature and bends them to the services of men. While bringing about this change, science emancipates the mind of man from the bondage of superstition and ignorance. Thus science plays a dominant part in the reconstruction of every country's life and economy, and solves its crucial problems of food, clothing, shelter, security, and peace.

Savarkar holds that the greater the domination of superstition the lesser is the tendency of the people towards science. So he raised his mighty pen against superstition from which flowed Voltaire's satire and emanated the force of Luther! Voltaire venerated nothing while Savarkar, like Swift, did his job with devastating candour. Voltaire smashed the ancient idols; Savarkar swept them into a corner as historical and cultural monuments for record and research. Voltaire disfigured the idols, Savarkar debarred them.

Savarkar's outlook is absolutely modern and scientific. He shows the fallacy and hollowness of time-worn and scripture-born arguments. He denounces the ideologies that describe the machine as a device of the devil invented to spite the glory of God and to strike a blow at the influence of religion and make man feeble, mechanical, helpless and heartless, leading him to his final doom. Savarkar pierces the *Kripan* of his reason through this false propaganda of ignorance. So he is

to Maharashtra what eighteenth century great European reformers were to Europe.

About the God of Man and the Lord of the Universe, he has peculiar views. According to him we live in this world, but the Universe has nothing to do with us. The belief that what the Lord of the Universe likes is good and what He likes must be beneficial to the progress of Man, is useless, because it is not true. The forces in the Universe are to a little degree for Man, but to a greater extent they are against him. What man can do at the most is to learn the laws of the Universe as best as he can, and turn them to his benefit and welfare. This is, he sums up, the real worship of the Universe.

In his view whatever contributes to human good is good, what is derogatory to the progress of humanity is bad. The definition of morality should be framed, he says, in reference to the common good of mankind. If God is kind enough to take a man out of danger, and is all pervading, who first throws a virtuous man into the flames of danger, he asks. Who sinks steamers full of men, children and women despite heartfelt prayers ? Who sets conflagration to the woods and roasts the birds, reptiles and other creatures like fishes ? Savarkar says why does God make the wicked so powerful as to be in a position to harass the good ? If God is omniscient and most kind, does he not know the innocence and purity of that good man beforehand ? Why does he at all test the virtuous man through cruel and fierce ordeals ? In this respect Savarkar is more agnostic than Ingersoll, and more balanced than Agarkar, the giant rationalist of Maharashtra.

Savarkar feels sorry that Superstition should hold its sway in our land even during the twentieth century. He observes : " We have allowed the Britishers to crush everything that was with us, but not that precious possession of ours 'Our credulous superstition ' ! " " Let an earthquake occur, public prayer is our remedy. Let a patriot suffer from sickness, we go to attend a crowded prayer-meeting. Let a pestilence ravage our land, and we kill goats in sacrifice to ward off the calamity. It was quite all right when we did not know the causes of such things, but to stick to these superstitions even

when science has revealed the causes of such calamities is simply absurd," wrote Savarkar some years ago.

Savarkar asks the Hindus to follow the cause and effect theory that is never disturbed by the thought of Divine pleasure or displeasure. He points out to the people that water boils at a certain temperature and God never interferes in this process! Oxygen and Hydrogen combined in proper proportions, are bound to yield water any day of the year whether God wills it or not! He proceeds: "With the aid of science, even Godless Russia is actually floating castles in the air in the form of aeroplanes and giant super-fortresses." "What actually matters is scientific accuracy and not Astrological superstition. Astrology cannot save what science has doomed and where safety is assured by science, Astrology cannot endanger it," he observes, in his brilliant article entitled, 'Machine is a boon to Mankind.'

Savarkar tells the people that it is time for them to realize that 'Sacrifice' cannot bring rains, nor can it avert a famine. He appeals to the Hindus to discard the superstitious and religious aspect clinging to their usages regarding maternity and asks them to send their women to well-equipped, well-lighted, modern maternity homes instead of galling them in dark, dingy and smoky rooms. He suggests that the corpses should be carried in a car in a decent manner and burnt with electricity.

Such a lover of science was bound to condemn the anti-machine attitude of Gandhism with its charkha fads. To Savarkar a telescope is a human eye with its capacity of vision increased a thousand times; a telephone is but a human ear with an enormous increase in its power.

"Machine has made man stay beneath water, rise high up in the sky. Machine has made man far-reaching, far-seeing, far-speaking and far-hearing. Machine has conferred upon man blessings which no prophets could give or no penance could secure. Mankind owes its present civilization entirely to the use of machine, and thus machine far from being a curse, is a wonderful boon which has bestowed supernatural powers upon this human race!" observes Savarkar. He appeals to the nation that it is the duty of every thinking man to press

the cause of science in every department of life. Without it, no nation can hope to survive the present stage, he adds.

To Savarkar science by itself is not responsible for the evils of Capitalism or the destructive orgy of modern war technique. It is the fault of the ways of distribution, lust for domination, and greed for exploitation. Electricity can light a bulb or detonate a bomb for the destruction of a city. Savarkar says that the evil should be checked. In short, not warfare but welfare of humanity should be the ultimate goal of science.

Savarkar stands for science and absolute science. He stands for TODAY and not for the blind traditions of yesterday. He appeals to the Hindus to test all their ancient holy works on the touchstone of science. He writes: "We do not regard the ancient works as all-pervading, omniscient and perfect by themselves. The *Smritis* and the *Vedas* we love reverentially, not as omniscient and unchangeable works, but as historical books and as the landmarks in the great and glorious journey of the human race." He asks the Hindus, therefore, to test the knowledge in the ancient holy works, their laws and learnings on the touchstone of science and to follow fearlessly what contributes to the good of the nation.

To Savarkar no animal is Divine. Even the cow is meant for man; not man for the cow. Not cow-worship but cow-protection is our national asset. He denounces the viewpoint of the Hindu leaders of the past, who, for saving the lives of a handful of cows, lost their kingdoms, their human rights, and their all. He, therefore, observes that if it is inevitable in a grave crisis to live upon beef and save human lives in India, the Hindus should also do it. The prosperity of a nation does not depend upon its capacity for penance and *yoga*, love of justice, or sense of virtue. History is replete with innumerable instances, he writes, which show that the wicked, cruel, unjust, and inhuman kings, conquerors, democracies and republics have smothered the weak kings and powerless democracies, though the victims were just, human and non-aggressive. Discipline, dry gunpowder, the range of guns, the edge of swords and an unflinching will are the factors that protect the rights and liberties of a nation. Justice and injustice have no relation to victory or defeat. Victory and defeat are quite different from justice and

injustice. If victory and defeat have at all any relation with any other thing, it is valour, observes Savarkar. But this worship of strength, power and discipline, Savarkar says, should not be used for aggressive and greedy aims. He states that justice, if weak, is futile and lame. It goes under. Injustice, if powerful, tramples upon it.

These rational views of Savarkar have impressed many persons and leaders of socialist and communist leanings. They acknowledge this Savarkar to be the rationalist leader of Maharashtra. In fact, in the domain of realism, rationalism and revolutionism Savarkar has surpassed Ranade, Tilak, Agarkar and Dr. Ketkar, the giant thinkers of Maharashtra. Sri S. K. Kshirsagar, an eminent and fairly unbiased literary critic in Maharashtra, observes that Maharashtra produced two great leaders of 'Thought.' They were Savarkar, and Dr. Ketkar, the compiler of Marathi *Dnyanakosh*. "Savarkar's matchless heroism," he writes, "and ideal patriotism had won a name and fame even before the transportation of Tilak to Mandalay. But Savarkar's all-pervading political philosophy became known after Tilak's death. Though Tilak was revolutionary in action, his thoughts on history, social philosophy, and politics were not as deep-rooted, fundamentally revolutionary and volcanic as those of Savarkar."[1] When a leader is accepted, Kshirsagar goes on, people have to change their entire line of thought, and Maharashtra learnt this for the first time in history from the leadership of Savarkar. Telling that Savarkar was the first and foremost 'leader of thought' of Modern Maharashtra who gained a wide following, Kshirsagar further remarks that had Savarkar's followers been truer to his philosophy than to its mere glorification, a far greater cult than that of the Sikhs or the Arya Samaj would have sprung up all over India in the form of Savarkarism. The critic's assessment is rather a little pessimistic and less detached. Pioneers of a great cause, precursors of a revolution and prophets of a new order have never prospered in their own age!

[1] K. B. Kshirsagar, *Suvarnatula*, p. 129.

II

As a man of letters Savarkar has no equal in Maharashtra. There never was a greater genius born since the days of the author of *Dnyaneshwari* in the land of the Mahrattas. Like a cloud, Savarkar is myriad-sided. He is a volcanic writer, a heroic author, a renaissance scholar, a historian in action, a dramatist, a novelist and an epic poet whose genius earns him a place among the first few greatest geniuses of our Motherland. His creative genius is versatile and has the force and flow of the Ganges and the effluence of a volcano. There is grandeur of the Gaurishankar, the sweep of an eagle, profundity of the ocean and the flash of lightning in all his writings. The pen and tongue of no other Indian author and orator have been so entirely devoted to the nation's cause as those of Savarkar. His literature fills the reader with hope and courage. It inspires the patriot, stimulates the thinker and drives the soldier to fight for justice, liberty and welfare of humanity. What is more, his is the only pen that has suckled a line of martyrs, an unparalleled phenomenon in Indian literature ! To Savarkar nothing is better, higher and holier than this noble human work of uplifting his fellowmen in this holy Hindusthan.

Sri G. T. Madkholkar, an ex-President of the Marathi Literary Conference, well-known critic and at present editor of the *Tarun Bharat*, Nagpur, in one of his memorable articles remarks that during the last seventy-five years, Maharashtra produced eight writers worth the name who possessed great imaginative power, viz. Chiplunkar, Paranjpe, Shripad Krishna, Achyutrao Kolhatkar, Kelkar, Gadkari, Atre and Khandekar. Of these, he says, Chiplunkar and Paranjpe are the only two writers whose imagination is of the classic type. Savarkar, he says, belongs to this classic type. The critic goes on : "The imagination of Savarkar is not as playful and charming as the butterfly ; it has the sublime sweep of an eagle. It has not the playfulness of a spring ; it has the depth of the sea. It has not the delicacy of a creeping flowering-plant ; it has the blazing power of lightning." One more quality and by no means a less important quality of Savarkar's imagination has escaped the notice of this eminent critic. It

is that Savarkar's imagination is not devoid of realism. Savarkar's imaginative power is not aimless and unbridled. It soars to the height of the Everest, but is not lost in the clouds! It has wings powerful enough to come down to the earth. In this Savarkar outshines his two rivals, Chiplunkar and Paranjpe.

In the domain of propaganda by literature no Indian writer excels Savarkar. Pointing out that the literary productions of Savarkar are dominated by vigour, sublimity and idealism, Sri Madkholkar writes: "Savarkar's idealism in both these respects—complete independence of India and the resurrection of the Hindus—is to be called uncommon for the simple reason that none else has so fearlessly advocated the cause of independence and nobody has so comprehensively preached for the resurrection of the Hindu race. It seems that his fighting temperament is not prepared to take note of the limitations, possibilities, or proprieties. The result is that whatever ideal he advocates assumes so intensely propagandistic and challenging a form that his writings are surcharged with the spirit of a battle-cry." In this, Sri N. C. Kelkar agrees with Sri Madkholkar. Describing Savarkar as a man of art, Kelkar says: "Delicacy, so inherent in art, is not apparent in Savarkar. Like the American author, Upton Sinclair, or Norris, Savarkar possesses all the force of a propagandist and is a straight hitter. He could hardly be excelled as a propagandist by anyone else in Maharashtra! Whatever subject he chooses, may it be the purification of the Marathi language, or the purification of the converts, the reform of the script, or the reformation of the society, he will come out like one pouncing for a battle-field with sword in hand." Kelkar proceeds: "A Spartan general advised his soldier, 'if your sword is shorter than that of your rival, always march a step in advance.' But Savarkar's sword is longer in the first instance and he himself stands a step in advance of others." Kelkar concludes: "All the writings of Savarkar are like leaps through arches fixed with knives and blazing torches turned inside."

Presiding over a literary function in Bombay in 1943, a renowned novelist of Maharashtra remarked that Savarkar's pen had the force of the combined pens of the trio: Agarkar,

Chiplunkar and Tilak. And indeed it is so! Chiplunkar. Agarkar and Tilak, all were spirited writers. All were virile. They all had a ready pen. But while Agarkar wrote with his dry intellect like a giant, Chiplunkar wrote like a proud Pope, and Tilak wrote like a leader-general. Savarkar, however, wrote like a learned rationalist and a warrior-prophet! Savarkar is master both of thought and word. His writings ripple with human emotions and masculine force. He overwhelms you with a well-drilled army of arguments. He thrusts the *kripan* of reason through the shield of falsehood, treachery, superstition and hypocrisy. But the most unrivalled characteristic of Savarkar's excellence is that he carries his great learning easily and writes with genius and judgment. His perspicuity is peculiar; his insight rare! No other pen has caused such a social upheaval with the violence of spring-tides as did the volcanic pen of this man. He has lashed his social opponents with a hard rod of rationalism and crushed their opposition. His rationalistic articles on 'The Machine,' 'God or Gunpowder,' 'God of Man and Lord of the Universe,' 'Woman's place in *Manusmriti*,' 'Woman's Beauty and Duty' and his biting pungent articles on 'the Cow' will easily rank him amongst the greatest social reformers of the world.

During his internment at Ratnagiri besides the several articles mentioned above, he wrote his famous book 'Hindu Pad-Padashahi' which is a history of the Rise and Fall of the Mahratta Empire. Read in conjunction with Ranade's *Rise of the Maratha Power*, this book gives you the full nationalistic and broad view of the great national movement of the Mahratta Hindus. It was a righteous war for the liberation of the Hindus against the theocratic patriotism, fanatic fury, volcanic greed and foreign domination of the Muslims. In this book Savarkar depicts in his authoritative tone the glorious spectacle of the rising Mahrattas, their insatiable central desire, and their inordinate love for re-establishing for the Hindus *Swadharma* and *Swaraj*, the God-given rights of Man. The book reveals Savarkar's master-intellect, true insight, stately diction, great thought, and honest pride.

Here is an interesting parallel! Both Savarkar and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wrote history. Both are great personalities.

Nehru wrote for fame and glory. Savarkar wrote for the nation. Both wrote their histories with vigour, vivacity and told their stories nobly and splendidly. While Nehru is a man of immense reading Savarkar is a man of profound knowledge. Savarkar wrote with astounding originality and much philosophy while Nehru wrote with little originality and no philosophy. Nehru lavishes praise on his heroes and lashes at others. Savarkar inspires the nation and hammers out false gods. But Nehru and Savarkar, the historians, differ on the vital issues of the Indian History. In his *Glimpses of World History* Nehru gets a perverted vision of Shivaji's action in killing Afzulkhan. Nehru's angle of vision could misrepresent the most vital crisis in the life of the greatest Indian of his age. That angle of vision expressed surprise in his *Discovery of India* that Jayachand is looked upon almost as a traitor, that Hinduism was a national religion, and that Pratap regarded Akbar, the hero of Pandit Nehru, as an alien. To Savarkar, the historian, Jayachand is synonymous with a traitor, Akbar a symbol of foreign domination and Pratap a nation-builder. Have you heard Savarkar, the historian, on Chitor, Panipat, and 1857 ? Have you come across any History of England that does not contain the words Trafalgar and Waterloo ? Have you come across any History of India without the mention of Chitor ? Behold, it is Nehru's *Discovery of India*.

Another great book Savarkar wrote during his internment is *My Transportation for Life*. It is the most convincing and inspiring work which depicts his jail life in the Andamans. If five books that will last as long as the Marathi language lasts, are selected, this stately and inspiring book will be one of them along with Dnyanadeva's *Dnyaneshwari*, Tukaram's *Gatha*, Tilak's *Gita Rahasya* and Apte's novel *But who pays Heed* ? Leading critics in Maharashtra are of opinion that this book of Savarkar would occupy a prominent place among the great classics of the world. Again a great parallel. Pandit Nehru wrote a great autobiography. In his mundane way, Nehru's autobiography is vigorous and glorious, but greatly pompous and partly spiteful.

Savarkar's *My Transportation for Life*, a part of his incomplete autobiography, is splendid, inspiring, ingenuous and stately. Nehru is bristling with views and vanity, while

Savarkar is bleeding with a serene thought and majestic heart. If the full epic autobiography of Savarkar and the great romantic life story of M. N. Roy had appeared in the field by now, India would have shone in the domain of world autobiographies with two immortal autobiographies. This Savarkar's book was translated into Gujarati and somehow was proscribed by the alien Government egged on by native machinations. And though on the advent of the Congress Ministry the inspiring book escaped the literary genius of Sri K. M. Munshi, the then Home Minister of Bombay, it was released by Sri Morarji Desai in a straightforward, patriotic and fearless manner when he became the Home Minister of Bombay.

As a dramatist, Savarkar did not care so much for a plot or stage effect. Here the playwright lives the life of his 'self', speaking and acting through his characters. His characters move with emotion and reason. Humour is sometimes uncommon to genius, and Savarkar is no exception to it. Still all the three plays of Savarkar written during his internment are wonderfully effective. The *Usshap* paves the way and struggles for the well-being and welfare of the Depressed Classes and strives to bury untouchability. Written on the background of Lord Buddha's life, *Sanyasta Khadga*—the Forsaken Sword—is a devastating commentary on the doctrine of absolute non-violence, and preaches that relative non-violence is a virtue. This play removes the web of absolute non-violence, and ends in showing that not the saint, but the sword protects the hearths and homes of a nation against the aggressive forces in the world. Some of the characters from this drama non-violently enough do not 'cut' jokes, because the word 'cut' implies violence! Dr. N. B. Khare as a staunch Congressman saw this play staged in Nagpur in the early thirties. As the play advanced and the guns of philosophy of the struggle for existence began to boom, Dr. Khare grew animated and to the amazement of the audience sprang upon the stage with dramatic suddenness and shouted: "Friends, countrymen, our country at present needs some one to preach this philosophy." This drama ends in a tragedy. Clear was the object! A slave country must accustom itself to the spirit of tragedy. *Uttarakriya*, the

third play of Savarkar, deals with the post-Panipat period of the Mahratta history.

Savarkar wrote two novels, the *Moplah Rebellion* and the *Transportation.* The first is short, succinct and sweet with a subtle charm and satire. Originally published in Babarao Savarkar's name—for Savarkar was then passing his days in internment—, the novel was acclaimed to be the best from the viewpoint of the ideal theme for a novel, by a front rank Marathi columnist, although he expressed his belief that the novel was written by Babarao Savarkar, which was not a fact. As the columnist was a critic of Savarkar and often ungenerous, his opinion about the novel should be doubly acceptable. The second novel has a thrilling background of the magic of the Andamans, and according to some film journals, it would be a great and thrilling screen version, if reproduced.

IV

As for the role of women in life, Savarkar has definite views to offer. He believes that there is a fundamental and natural difference between man and woman. Their duties are different. So their education, too, must necessarily differ. Reformer as he is, he does not like women to obey the dictates of old useless customs.

Savarkar regards female education indispensable to the uplift of a nation ; but by female education he does not necessarily mean university degrees, although he has no objection to their obtaining the degrees without disregarding their primary duty to the home, children, and the nation. He holds that a system of education must be drawn up on new lines, and women should be given some sort of specialized training congenial to the temperament of women. A woman should be a ministering angel rather than a masculine Amazon or a Virago. She should imbibe the quality of her proverbial modesty and grace rather than mere eloquence or proficiency in mathematics. Women are the solace and comfort of hearths and homes. The larger the number of good healthy mothers, he observes, the stronger and healthier will be the nation. Therefore, a woman's education should enable her to enrich

the nation with a generation stronger, more beautiful, and more patriotic than the past. The Russian woman is on an equal footing with man. Yet, does it mean, he asks, that Stalin delivers a child instead of his wife ?

To Savarkar life is an oblation. According to him a woman should look beautiful with her natural charms and try to keep it with good aids to beauty. In addition, he has something to say to a beauty about her duty ! Beauty is handed over to her, he warns, as a strict sacred trust. And that trust is eugenics. A beautiful woman who fails to fulfil this condition becomes morally guilty of a breach of trust. A nation that strives to have daughters more beautiful than their mothers and sons stronger than their fathers necessarily adds to artistic culture handed down to it through heritage ! Is this not the angle and approach of a realist, a rationalist, and a reformer ? Years after Savarkar wrote this, we find today England, France and other European countries propagating these very doctrines to arrest the decrease in population in their countries and to avoid the consequential downfall and decay of the virility of their nations.

CHAPTER XI

Back to Freedom

In spite of his heroic work in the direction of social and mental revolution throughout the period of internment at Ratnagiri, Savarkar was trying his utmost to break his shackles. Government were trying their way to prolong the period of his internment on some plea or other. It is said that climate influences character. Inhabitants as they were of a region where fire is a luxury, the Britishers took great care of fire wherever it burnt in their Indian Empire. They watched the fire-places in India with special care. Whenever any fire broke out in any part of India, Savarkar's residence was shadowed. Surprise raids were a common feature for Savarkar's residence. Once the Superintendent of Police surrounded Savarkar's residence at dawn, and showed Savarkar the order under which he was directed to search Savarkar's residence for copies of the proscribed book, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. Savarkar came out of the house with his family and said to the officer with a smile : "Yes, we have come out. You can go in and search the house. But remember that I have struggled with Scotland Yard for four years and outwitted them." Yet the police had not come to Savarkar's residence without reason. Sardar Bhagat Singh had printed two thousand copies of that famous book of Savarkar to raise funds for his revolutionary society and had respectfully sent the first two copies of the book to Savarkar.

On another occasion Savarkar was almost perplexed. The C.I.D. and police officers surprised him. But gifted with a marvellous presence of mind, he waited till the search was over and at last when the time for the report came, he handed over to the officer the very writing pad which contained an article ready for the press. The police officer used it without peeping inside while Savarkar held a crumbled piece of paper containing a poem on Sardar Bhagat Singh.

To supplement his heroic efforts and express his views unobserved on current politics, Savarkar then patronised a weekly named *Shraddhananda* edited by his brother, Dr. N. D. Savarkar, in Bombay. It published several inspiring articles by Savarkar. Though the articles did not appear in the name of Savarkar, Maharashtra could feel the inspiring touch and tone; and in a short time this weekly attained enormous popularity and had a wide circulation. Gandhiji had just then begun to come out of his virtual retirement. The Madras Session of the Indian National Congress passed a resolution demanding absolute political independence. Gandhiji dubbed it childish. Savarkar showed his great jubilation through the weekly, and bitterly criticised the attitude of Gandhiji towards that resolution.

Condolence meetings in memory of Swami Shraddhananda, who was cruelly murdered by a fanatic Muslim, in memory of Deshbandhu Das and Lala Lajpat Rai, were addressed by Savarkar before sighing multitudes at Ratnagiri.

At this juncture there was a move to elect Savarkar as President of the Hindu Mahasabha at its Jubbulpore Session in 1927, but it was not successful. Referring to this proposal, Sri N. C. Kelkar who presided over the Session, began his Presidential Address with these words: "The Reception Committee, I learn, had adverted to the possibility of getting Mr. Vinayakrao Savarkar to preside over this Conference, and I share their regret and disappointment in the failure of their object." [1] During these days a prominent Congressman of Maharashtra suggested Savarkar's name for the presidentship of the Indian National Congress and wrote that in the event of Savarkar's absence, his Address should be read out by installing a portrait of Savarkar in the presidential chair. Not only this, it was even suggested that Savarkar should represent the Congress at the Round Table Conference.[1]

The Ratnagiri Hindu Sabha was the first organized Hindu Body which came forward to back up Dr. Moonje in his acceptance of the invitation to the Round Table Conference and in January 1931 passed a resolution "expressing appreciation of the ability and courage with which Moonje and Jayakar

[1] N. C. Kelkar, *Speeches and Writings*, p. 301.
[2] Quoted in the *Pratibha*, dated 15-1-1936.

had defended the Hindu cause, which it was declared, was identical with the cause of India as a whole against the anti-national encroachments of the Moslems." The resolution further threw a challenge to the Moslems to accept an arbitration by the League of Nations. It added that the rejection of the arbitration offer by the Muslims exposed the unjust nature of their claims.

In 1934 Savarkar was arrested again and detained for two weeks in connection with shots fired at some military officer in Bombay by Sri Wamanrao Chavan, a Sanghatanist firebrand from Ratnagiri. Government, however, could establish nothing and Savarkar was released on the 15th day.

Government went on extending the period of Savarkar's internment from time to time--1929 to 1937—as they considered him a danger to the peace of India. In the last week of October 1930, the Bombay Government instructed Mr. D. Simington, District Magistrate of Ratnagiri, to give his opinion as to whether, having regard to Savarkar's antecedents and to the then political situation, he considered that the restrictions imposed on Savarkar should be either wholly or partly withdrawn without danger.

The District Magistrate, Mr. D. Simington, is reported to have opined that in the then state of politics Savarkar should not be released. He also reported to Government that Savarkar had devoted himself to the removal of untouchability and had achieved a certain measure of success, and added that he had successfully admitted the untouchables to the new *Patit Pavan Temple.* It was a bad recommendation, but a gentleman's appreciation of Savarkar's social work. Are there any impartial souls now in power who are frank enough to admit what the Englishman wrote secretly? In 1934 Mr. R. M. Maxwell, Secretary to the Government of Bombay, declined Savarkar's request for permission to go to Bombay to attend the Bombay City and Suburbs Hindu Sabha Conference which was held in Bombay on the 23rd and 24th of January 1934. But whenever he was allowed to go out of Ratnagiri City or District, secret wires clicked in code words from Ratnagiri to all important police headquarters of Bombay, Poona, and other cities. And every District Magistrate in the province tried his utmost to avoid Savarkar's

presence in his District by complaining to the Home Department that his presence in the District would tremendously increase the work of the police and other departments.

Years rolled on and at long last the day of release arrived. After fighting the Provincial elections under the new Act of 1935 and almost unchallenged by any major political opposition for the Hindu seats, the Congressmen were hatching the eggs of ministership under the wings of Gandhiji! Government were eager to have interim ministries in the provinces with a view to pressing the Congress to accept office. In the interim period of the deadlock Khan Bahadur Dhanjishaw Cooper, with the support of Sri Jamnadas M. Mehta, a representative of the Tilakite Democratic Swaraj Party, expressed his willingness to form an interim Ministry in the Province on one condition. Mehta had been a champion of the campaign for Savarkar's release for a number of years in the past. He made Savarkar's release a condition precedent to accepting the office. H.E. Lord Brabourne, the then Governor of Bombay, showed his willingness to release Savarkar subject to good behaviour. Mehta's repartee at once resolved the bracket of the condition! Mehta said that the Governor himself and even the speaker himself were free citizens subject to good behaviour, in fact any citizen in any country was so. Then the Governor's telephone murmured between London and Bombay, between Bombay and Simla and to the great relief of Hindusthan, Savarkar was at very long last released unconditionally on the 10th of May 1937, the 10th of May, the red letter day in the Indian history on which the first War of Independence started.

To have released one of the greatest political prisoners of the world, to have set free the greatest revolutionary leader of India and the noblest son of Mother India was no common achievement for Sri Jamnadas.

Several functions were held in Ratnagiri in honour of Savarkar's release. At one of these functions Sri M. D. Joshi, a prominent Congressman expressed his view that Savarkar was also one of the doctors of the nation and would prescribe for the ills of the nation. Whatever party Savarkar might join, he would add to the freedom movement and welfare of

the country, added the speaker. A purse was presented to Savarkar by the citizens of Ratnagiri. In his parting speech Savarkar was moved with the memory of the social movements in Ratnagiri. He said he was very sorry that due to his mission there were divisions, heart-breakings and scuffles among families and friends. Savarkar continued that he had done it all in the best interest of the Country, God and Man.

As for the future, Savarkar said that the goal of independence was to be attained by resistance, alliance and pressure; that the basic outline of that independence should be a 'one man one vote' democracy and that he would strive for and achieve that goal not by sacrificing the just rights of the Hindus. Whatever happened, he said, he would never desert the cause of the Hindus. He would die as a Hindu rather than prosper as an anti-Hindu soul, concluded Savarkar. After his release Savarkar unfurled the tri-colour flag reminiscent of the Abhinava Bharat emblem at the Ratnagiri District Political Conference held under the presidentship of Mr. K. F. Nariman. Political life and fight to begin after a lapse and lull of full twenty-seven years!

But the India of those days was dominated by Gandhiji who had literally thrown away into the waste paper basket the appeal for Savarkar's release. When approached for his support and signature to the appeal, Gandhiji said he did not know who that Savarkar was, and asked whether he was the same Savarkar who wrote *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, and subsequently explained to the public that he thought it derogatory to approach the British Government for the release of Savarkar. Nehru went one step further. He was reported to have torn non-violently the 'Release Savarkar' memorandum to pieces. And all this happened before Savarkar had joined the Hindu Mahasabha as a political party in opposition to the Congress. Coming events cast their shadows before! Let history record this fact which is stranger than fiction!

CHAPTER XII

Whirlwind Propaganda

I

Savarkar's dramatic release was a pleasant surprise to Hindudom. Leaders like Sri Kelkar, Bhai Parmananda, Dr. Moonje and Sri Aney were happy over the exhilarating event that brought to them the release of a national force. The reaction of the Congress High Command to his release was notable. Pandit Nehru welcomed Savarkar back to freedom. Rajaji felt great joy at the release of a national hero, who was to him a symbol of courage, bravery and patriotism. Deshagaurav Subhas Bose welcomed him, and urged him to join the Congress and strengthen the national movement. He added that bright future awaited Savarkar. Sri M. N. Roy welcomed the hero and hoped that Savarkar would devote his life again to the emancipation of India on his own line of thinking.[1] Gandhiji had nothing to say about it. He was proverbially silent.

The appearance of Savarkar on the political horizon naturally aroused the envy of the petty patriots to whom Gandhism was a faith and profession. Naturally the non-violent non-embarrassing politics suffered a volcanic wave. The shrewd leaders in the Congress camp, who knew Savarkar's mettle, were sure that their steel was not strong enough to break his spirit. They, therefore, sophistically hoped that Savarkar would join the Congress or rest on his laurels. Some nervously whispered that the steam-roller was out. They knew well that he wore both a cross and a crown. The crown had been smelted, shaped, tried and glorified in the process of untold sufferings and incomparable sacrifice. But what all of them feared most was his conquering personality, matchless oratory, and, above all, his militant political ideology.

[1] Messages of Nehru, Bose, Roy and Rajaji to the *Lokamanya*, Bombay, dated 27-6-1937.

Maker of history, father of a political ideology, leader of a world-famous revolutionary party, Savarkar was not a man to follow success by changing his principles and betraying the souls of his revolutionary comrades. Lonely he set out on his mission. He bade farewell to Ratnagiri to see how the land lay, where the fuel existed, where the spark of righteous resistance smouldered in Maharashtra. He reverentially bowed to the *Gadi* of Shivaji at Kolhapur, and proclaimed his entrance into the political arena. At Pandharpur, the southern Benares, he paid his respects to the great saints of Maharashtra. It was at Miraj that he first fluttered his claw and attacked the imbecile attitude of the Congressmen in the Central Assembly where they had sometime before shamelessly argued that the kidnapping of Hindu girls in the North-West Frontier Province was but a problem of physical wants! This stroke was a direct challenge, a portent, a straight hit, and a penetrating arrow aimed at the power and prestige of the Congress. Congressmen surreptitiously twisted the statement, tried to make an issue out of it, invented a pretext, and boycotted the reception functions held in Savarkar's honour!

Savarkar reached Poona, the political, historical, and cultural capital of Maharashtra. The whole city was stirred. There was a new hope, a new life. With Savarkar came up the historic flag. The resurrected flag was hoisted for the first time in recent years! The spell of the name Savarkar was as mighty as it was mesmeric. Political workers, who were humbled down and routed by the Congress, began to look up straight. In Bombay Savarkar was given a warm reception at a meeting which was addressed by Mr. K. F. Nariman, Sri M. N. Roy and Sri S. K. Patil, all paying glowing tributes to Savarkar's sufferings and sacrifice. M. N. Roy touchingly referred to Savarkar as the tree of which he was a branch among others, and with glowing eyes added that the inspiration he had drawn from Savarkar during his student days could stand him in good stead, and enabled him to face forces of injustice, exploitation and slavery in all parts of the world!

Savarkar took his permanent abode in Bombay. But time and again he visited Poona and other parts of Maharashtra during the latter part of 1937. Those who knew his political

ideology were not surprised to hear that Savarkar joined the Tilakite Democratic Swaraj Party and shortly afterwards the Hindu Mahasabha. He did not join the Congress that had departed from its democratic and national stand, and begun to surrender to the anti-national demands of the Muslims. Organizing a separate political party, however, was an uphill task. Gandhiji was fortunate in having at his disposal the Congress, which was already shaped into an active political organisation by Tilak, Lajpat Rai, and Das. Here Savarkar began almost with a clean slate.

But why this new path ? Savarkar declared that the right of revolt belonged to anybody provided he was prepared to face the consequential ordeal. When Jesus Christ died, he had a few followers ; Mohammed had to flee sometimes for want of support ; and Columbus discovered America despite opposition and ridicule offered by his crew and comrades. There was no harm, Savarkar said, if the country had many parties. Savarkar further said that the Moderates also were great patriots ; but Tilak opposed them and brought about unrest that led to a political awakening. The revolutionaries left Tilak behind, Savarkar continued, and showed the world to what degree the barometer of active resistance and national wrath could be raised by struggling India ! "The object of our worship is the Goddess of Freedom. The temple is one. Let the ways and means differ. The worshippers should not quarrel among themselves over the correctness of the means." Differences always exist and their clashes make for light ! He then reminded the people that Tilak became Lokamanya after his death. Tilak did not agree entirely with him ; but Tilak did not commit the sin of coming in his way, Savarkar declared. He pointed out that Tilak, Gokhale, and Surendranath Banerjee never considered politicians of independent thinking their enemies, because those politicians did not subscribe to their own political views. He expressed also the fear that the Congress would one day throttle the Bande Mataram, and the national song would meet the fate the poetry of Bhushan suffered, in the University curriculum. And within a few years the Congress did throttle Bande Mataram on the altar of their pseudo-nationalism for appeasing

the Muslim mind. "Efforts of all and various forces," Savarkar asserted, "have led to the dawn of freedom. It is a victory achieved by the cumulative efforts and combination of all forces. Still Delhi is far off."

As regards his political mission, he declared that his aim was to establish a free independent Indian State on the bedrock of the Hindus, the national majority. He added that he wanted to make the paper majority of the Hindus actively conscious of the fact that they were the bedrock and mainspring of the national life and the State. In brief but in unmistakable terms, he defined his mission to be :

(1) Absolute political independence of Hindusthan as the goal.
(2) Its achievement by any means.
(3) Regeneration of the Hindus.

Savarkar then explained why he laid stress on the consolidation of the Hindus, though he asked them to remove the rigidity of the cast-iron rituals, and to break all the barriers of caste system. The concept of Hindutva, he said, was broader than Hinduism which related to the religious system of the Hindus, their theology and dogma. But Hindutva was far more comprehensive and referred not only to the religious aspect of the Hindu people as the word Hinduism did, but comprehended their cultural, social, political, and linguistic aspects as well. He declared: "Let Hinduism concern itself with the salvation of life after death, the concept of God, and the Universe. Let individuals be free to form opinions about the trio. The whole Universe from one end to the other is the real book of religion. But so far as the materialistic and secular aspect is concerned, the Hindus are a nation bound by a common culture, a common history, a common language, a common country, and a common religion."

The first appeal Savarkar made to the youth was to start rifle classes, to learn to handle at least the air-guns. "There is a scope for drama, poetry and literature in life ; but when the mother is on her death-bed, it is a sin to go out for a change of climate, or to enjoy life and stars," he said. In the last week of October 1937, Savarkar hoisted at Poona the tricolour flag of the Revolutionary India, which was designed by the Abhinava Bharat and first unfurled by Madame Cama

in Germany. This was the first flag that was flown as the national flag of India since 1857, and fortunately it was brought to India after years through the efforts of Sri Gajananrao Ketkar. In the following month Savarkar presided at the C.P. and Berar Hindu Conference in Akola. There he defined the principles of his nationalism. Since independence had come in sight, he thought, it was the proper time to define it. He told the conference that every country was known after and ruled in the name of its national majority. "The Hindus, the national majority of Hindusthan," he declared, "had sacrificed almost exclusively for the liberation of Hindusthan. In that very Bengal which is now virtually ruled by the Muslims the sacrificial fire was kept burning by Hindus alone. The buried bones in the Andamans can also proudly proclaim that the heroes of independence were the Hindus. Whatever has been achieved is done through the sweat, struggle and sacrifice of the Hindus. Those laws and rules under which the weal, welfare, culture and honour of the Hindus would flourish would alone constitute Swaraj for the Hindus!" He reiterated his unflinching resolve that it was better to die in the thick of the fight for such a righteous cause than to live with passive interest and see its failure.

Savarkar's visit to Nagpur had its peculiar charm and enthusiasm. A vast crowd received him at the Nagpur station. Amidst an atmosphere full of a new hope and charm, Dr. Moonje, the champion of the Hindu cause, in a moving tone said that whatever service and power he had at his disposal, he laid from that moment at the disposal of Savarkar. On December 13, 1937, at Nagpur Savarkar warned the Hindus to be prepared to flout the Pakistan scheme. In the same speech, referring to the then political trend and happenings in Kashmir, he foretold that the existence of Kashmir Hindus would soon be in utter danger, if the anti-Hindu forces were not checked at that very stage. How prophetic he was can be judged from the current history of Kashmir!

He, therefore, openly denounced Gandhiji's ill-advice to the Maharaja of Kashmir to abdicate in favour of the Muslims and to go to Benares to do penance, because the Muslims were in a majority in Kashmir. He attacked the unfair attitude of Gandhiji who would not advise in the same way the Nizam

of Hyderabad and Nawab of Bhopal to abdicate in favour of the majorities in those States, who happened to be Hindus, and ask the Muslim rulers to go to Mecca to do Toba! The rapid advance of Savarkar's fiery and clear-cut ideal of unalloyed nationalism began to create a nucleus of followers, leaders, and supporters all over India. It was in the fitness of things that such an inspired personality was elected unanimously to the presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha, in spite of the opposition of some Congressmen for its nineteenth Annual Session which was held at Ahmedabad on the 30th of December 1937. This was the highest honour that the Hindus could confer upon him. Savarkar made the greatest sacrifice of his life in joining the Hindu Mahasabha and staked his name and his all for the cause of the Hindus. Pelf, power, and popularity were on the opposite side in the Congress. There was no position to which he could not have risen once he had joined the Congress. But he preferred duty to popularity, weal of the nation to personal wealth, and personal cross to popular crown. Prataps never pander to popularity or bend their necks to dishonourable eminence. It is given to Mansinghs to thrive on it. The Hindu Mahasabha now began to rise as a political organization. Savarkar infused life into it and gave it a Platform, a Slogan, a Bible, and a Banner!

And such a warrior philosopher appeared on the political field and platform of Indian politics, when the dawn of rosy revolution had faded away, the morning of the unalloyed nationalism of Dadabhai Naoroji and Tilak had disappeared, and the evenings were filled with weird shadows of pseudo-nationalism! To defend the legitimate, civic, religious, cultural and economic rights of the Hindus in their Homeland was taboo in 1937! Builders of our nation like Shivaji, Pratap, and Guru Govindsingh were stigmatized as treacherous or misguided! Prophets like Dayananda, noble patriots like Lala Lajpat Rai and Swami Shraddhananda were decried as narrow-minded bigots. The Muslims were offered by Hindu leaders blank cheques of suzerainty over the Hindus on the one hand, and the Hindus were themselves offered blank betrayals by their leaders on the other. The inhuman atrocities of the Moplahs were painted with the colour of patriotism and brotherhood. The slogan, no Swaraj without

Hindu-Muslim Unity, was the breath of life of the pseudo-nationalists, and this slogan was constantly and rightly held by the foreign Government as a loaded gun against the national demand for freedom.

The policy of non-co-operation and non-violence was the cry of the day. Jail-seeking was regarded as the royal road to independence, although, in fact, it was a royal road to personal prestige and power. A soldier was accursed as a sinner, and a spinner in the Congress camp was nursed as a saviour ! The principle of one vote for three Hindus and three votes for one Muslim in the form of the Communal Award was accepted as justifiable, democratic and fully national. Recognition to Muslim population had become a righteous duty, but mere recording of the correct Hindu population in the census was a communal act. The cause of the Muslim religion had become a national call, and the Hindu religion became a symbol of reactionarism. Hindu leaders like Shrimati Sarojini Naidu appealing to the Muslims of the world to unite were eulogized, and the Muslim leaders, who publicly declared their intention to divide the Depressed Classes between the Hindus and Muslims, were elevated to the pedestal of Godheads. But Hindu leaders, who stood by Hindu self-respect, were branded as communalists. In fact, it was the Dark Age in Indian politics of the modern times, as Dr. Ambedkar once put it.

At this dark period, the inspired personality of Savarkar appeared on the Indian political horizon incomparable in sacrifice, uncompromising in principles. The warrior, who had lived in his veritable grave, grappling with death for a quarter of a century, again came to the front. For the welfare of his people, for carving out the independence of his nation, he had eaten the coarsest food, worn the roughest clothes, slept on the bare earth in the darkest room, and was harnessed to the oil-mill.

The voice of such a dynamic, mesmeric personality was bound to exercise an irresistible influence over the people. Savarkar felt it was his righteous duty to remove ruthlessly the web of Gandhism that had choked the political life of Hindusthan. Great political leaders are born with fabulous energy ! So was stubborn Tilak. So was tenacious Gandhiji.

So was indefatigable Nehru. So was dynamic Savarkar. These were the four leaders that shook the remotest corner of Hindusthan with the vibrations of their views and vigour! Savarkar marched from Province to Province, propagating his great ideal, explaining the territorial nationalism of the Congress, and expounding his own stand based on political rationalism and historical realism. He went on conquering new planes and new patriots, pushing aside time-old personalities and theories like cobwebs.

II

Throughout the length and breadth of Hindusthan, Savarkar was hailed as the saviour of Hindusthan, partly with mixed feelings of love and reverence and partly with awe and jealousy. A sea of humanity welcomed him in February 1938, at Delhi, the historic capital of India. In that memorable procession of thousands of people, Dr. Jayakar and Loknayak Aney took keen interest with pride. Flowers were showered, sweets were distributed, all public squares of Delhi were decorated and flags were unfurled in honour of the great hero, who made for the first time a triumphant entry into the heart of the nation. The new ideology stirred the United Provinces. This province was the chief scene of the romantic history of 1857, and naturally Savarkar's speeches were filled with the glorious reminiscences of that heroic struggle for Independence. The Cawnpore Municipality presented Savarkar with an address. Cities like Faizabad, Barabanki, Lucknow and Agra gave him public receptions. At Cawnpore he delivered, on April 3, 1938, an inspiring speech on '1857'. He said: "This very Cawnpore has witnessed the defeat of the British forces at the hands of Tatya Tope. Since my childhood I have been cherishing an irresistible yearning for visiting this city as the venue of the scenes of revolution and visiting Kashi as the holy city of Hindusthan. Since my arrival here I have been haunted by the spirits of Nanasahib, Tatya Tope, the war cries raised by their battalions and the thunder of their cannons." He saw the famous massacre Ghat at Cawnpore and the temple of *Shiv* whence Tatya Tope blew his bugle, and gave a clarion call to

his army. The historian of '1857' astounded the people by exactly pointing out certain places imprinted with historical events of 1857, though it was his first visit to the city.

At Faizabad he paid a visit to the Sanskrit Pathashala and Gurukul. While replying to the address given by the institution, Savarkar paid glowing tributes to the authorities and teachers of the Pathashala for having given equal opportunities to all Hindus irrespective of castes. Receiving an address on behalf of the public at Barabanki, Savarkar reached Lucknow on April 5. There he was taken in a grand procession, which passed through the streets decorated with arches. At a mammoth public meeting Savarkar declared how the Congress had departed from its true nationalism and was surrendering to the anti-national demands of the Muslims. It was here that Acharya Narendradeo saw Savarkar and exchanged views with him. Then addressing a meeting at Hasan Ganj and Shahad Ganj, he reached Agra where he was accorded a rousing reception, and was presented with public addresses. In the Agra Fort Savarkar showed how and where Shivaji confronted the trembling Aurangzeb.

In the middle of April Savarkar visited Sholapur and during the first week of May 1938, attended the Hindu Youth Conference at Poona, when processions demanding the lifting of the ban on arms were taken out.

Then the land of the *Vedas* and the Five Rivers gave a splendid reception to Savarkar, the warrior philosopher of the Land of *Karmayoga*. In the second week of May 1938, Lahore gave him a public reception. Amidst deafening applause he garlanded the statue of Lala Lajpat Rai, the lion of the Punjab. He also paid a visit to the historic Shahid Ganj of the Sikhs. At Lahore, in a Press interview, Savarkar said that he and Mr. Jinnah were not birds of the same feather, because, while he stood for equality and no concessions, Mr. Jinnah did not stand for equality and always asked for more and more concessions. Savarkar told the press representatives that he insisted that either there should be joint electorates without any reservation of seats for any community in any legislature or any local body, or there must be joint electorates with reservation of seats for minorities either on population basis or according to a system of weightages equally applicable to

all minorities. He further said that the Congress should assume the role of a Parliament in which all parties should participate, and not the role of a party as it was developing in those days.

While writing on the splended reception accorded to Savarkar by Lahore people, the *Tribune*, a leading Nationalist paper, appreciated the services that Savarkar rendered to the cause of the Motherland. Discussing the difference between the viewpoints of Savarkar and Jinnah, the paper observed: "As a matter of fact Mr. Savarkar's anchor as a sincere and a true nationalist holds as ever. The several speeches made by him during the last three days, show unmistakably both the general soundness of his political views and the fervour and intensity of his love of country and freedom. His conception of a modern nation and an ideal state is that of a nation and state in which no difference is made between one person and another on the score of community, religion or caste. Holding this view, and this is undoubtedly the only correct view, it is only right that he should want the Congress which is India's supreme national organization, not to recognize religion, class and community and to stand for the equal rights of all citizens."[1]

At Amritsar Savarkar was accorded an imposing reception by the people. Several thousands of Sikhs received Savarkar in the famous Golden Temple. When at a meeting the Sikhs presented Savarkar with a Kripan, he asked them what earthly use was served in presenting that Kripan to a Mahratta by those people for whom the Kripan had lost its meaning and spirit and whom the doctrine of non-violence was haunting! Delivering a speech at another public meeting, he said: "The more you follow the Hindu-Muslim unity, the further it runs away from you. Plainly speaking, there does not exist any minority problem worth the name. The Parsis, the Jews and the Christians inhabiting this land never claimed special rights and the latter have declared more than once that they do not want separate electorates."[2]

On his way back, he paid a visit to Ajmer. There addressing a big meeting, Savarkar paid tributes to the services of

[1] Quoted in *The Mahratta*, dated 20-5-1938.
[2] *Ibid.*

Gandhiji and other leaders of the Congress for creating a spirit of awakening in the country, but asked the people to oppose the Congress for its appeasing policy towards the Muslims. Referring to this new awakening, *the Sunday Times*, Lahore, paid a glowing tribute to Savarkar and said : "He is a man of sterling worth and possesses an indomitable courage which made him boldly face the ordeals, through *which he passed.*"[1]

After paying visits to Ajmer, Nasik, Gwalior and Jodhpur, Savarkar turned to Sind. Long before, while in internment, Savarkar had sounded a grave warning to the Sind Hindus against the separation of Sind from the Bombay Province. However, the limb of the Bombay Province, like the lamb in the Aesop's Fable, was misled and was not only mutilated from Bombay, but subsequently was cut off from the Motherland.

The receptions accorded to Savarkar all over Sind from the 1st to the 10th of September 1938, were imposing. In Karachi the procession took five hours to wend its way to its destination. The enthusiasm of the Hindus was afire. Sukkar vied with Karachi in offering its homage to the leader. The Hyderabad Municipality held a reception of civic welcome to the great son of India. Kothari and Sukkar Municipalities, too, paid their homage to Savarkar. The Sind Hindu Conference, which was then held at Sukkar under the lead of Savarkar, sounded a timely warning to the Sind Hindus, and asked them to boycott the Congress and organize a stronghold of Hindus to save their hearths, homes and interests in the near future. The Sind Hindus then under the evil influence of the Congress forgot this warning, and ultimately paid for their folly in 1947. Describing this tour of Savarkar, the *Sind Observer*, an English Daily of Congress persuasion, declared : "He came, he saw, he conquered."

In October 1938, the Hyderabad (Bhaganagar) struggle was launched to vindicate the civic, religious, economic and political rights of the Hindus in the Hyderabad State, who were groaning under the heels of the medieval tyranny of the Nizam. The Hindus and Sikhs in the State were not allowed to hold meetings, take out processions political or

[1] Quoted in *The Mahratta*, dated 20-5-1938.



President Savarkar taken out in a huge procession at Madura (1940)



Savarkar with Bhai Parmananda, Dr. Moonje and Dr. Shinde at Nagpur in 1938



Bhopatkar back from Aurangabad Jail. He is seen with Sri Ganpatrao Nalavade, his wife and Sri Jamnadas Mehta

religious, repair their temples, and to start even private schools to educate the children in their mother tongue; Hindu temples, Hindu Bazaars and Hindu houses were burnt down; twelve per cent Muslim population held eighty per cent posts, positions and jobs of vantage in the administration. And what was the attitude of the Congressmen to this movement for civil liberties? Their head, Gandhiji, eventually declared that he did not want to embarrass *His Exalted* Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad. Such was the policy of the Congressmen and Gandhiji that whenever the tyrants were Muslims and the tyrannised were Hindus, their nationalism, their love of justice, their love of civic rights and political liberty would at once crawl. Therefore in deference to the wish of their *de facto* leader, Gandhiji, the Congressmen did not raise their little finger against this barbarous and fanatical persecution. Their sympathy, their love of justice and their tears they poured and shed with Tagore for Abyssinia and the Arabs in Palestine.

Savarkar attended the historic Aryan Conference at Sholapur in the last week of December 1938, at the pressing request from the leaders of the Arya Samaj for his guidance and lead in connection with the Hyderabad struggle, which was gathering momentum, and as a result of which several thousands of Hindu Civil Resisters were suffering imprisonment in the Nizam's jails. In the same week came off the Annual Session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Nagpur where Buddhist representatives from Japan also were present. The procession in honour of the President-elect took five hours to reach its destination. Boundless enthusiasm prevailed. Flowers were showered from an aeroplane upon President Savarkar, the chosen leader. The Presidential Address of Savarkar delivered at this Nagpur Session was a master-piece of the principles of nationalism and humanism, rights and duties of the minorities, of foreign policy and national and international politics. During the Session the Hyderabad Movement received the prime attention of all the Sanghatanists.

Then followed Savarkar's visit in the third week of February 1939, to the land of Bande Mataram, the home of Surendranath, C. R. Das, Bepin C. Pal, Arvind Ghose, and

Khudiram Bose. The Khulna Conference opened a new outlet for the salvation of the Bengal Hindus. Such was the tremendous effect of Savarkar's matchless oratory and dynamic personality on Bengal that, pointing to the thundering receptions to Savarkar and to his merciless logic, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika,* an organ of Congress persuasion, sounded a timely warning to the Congress bosses to be on their guard and to dissuade themselves from placating the unholy demands of the Muslim League. Savarkar captivated the hearts of the leaders, lawyers, and public workers of Bengal. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mukherjee was initiated into Indian politics, and he became a new asset and nucleus of Hindu Sanghatan ideology. Indeed, Mukherjee was a discovery of Savarkar's tour in Bengal. Almost all Bengal papers published special issues full of life-sketches of the romantic career of the Prince of the revolutionaries of Hindusthan. One daily described this tour as an all-talkie, all-movie tour of the Indian Robinhood.

After Bengal came the turn of Bihar, the land of the sturdy fighters and tough warriors for the Hindu cause. A Provincial Hindu Conference was held at Monghyr in the third week of March 1939, under the Presidentship of Savarkar. The flag, the spirit and the ideology began to capture new fields and new avenues. Monghyr gave an imposing reception to Savarkar and the procession was the most splendid that the city ever witnessed. The leading Hindi Daily, the *Prabhakar*, of Monghyr, described it as an unparalleled reception ever accorded to Great Men. Savarkar delivered his stirring Presidential Address with great heartforce. He declared that Hinduism and Hindutva were two different things. Hindutva constituted, he said, all those aspects and aspirations which the word nationalism comprised! The *Indian Nation*, Patna, commenting on the Presidential Address of Savarkar, wrote: "It was a stirring speech. He made an impassioned appeal to Hindus to unite to resist inroads, and revive their past glory. His speech was heard with rapt attention and created an atmosphere of great enthusiasm among the Hindus. He spoke with feeling, and the audience also was greatly impressed with the arguments he gave in support of his conclusions." Then followed the Mahakoshal Provincial

Hindu Conference at Jubbulpore in the first week of June 1939. The idea of the unjust treatment to the national majority of the Hindus and the danger of disintegration of Hindusthan began to attract the attention of the Hindus. The Jubbulpore Municipality held a civic welcome in honour of Savarkar at the time of the Conference.

In the meantime 'Hyderabad Days' were observed all over India by Hindu Sanghatanists; centres of civil resistance movement were opened with dictators in charge at Poona, Nagpur, and Akola. The Hindu Mahasabha gave Savarkar full powers in respect of the movement. Savarkar toured Berar in the middle of April and in June 1939, and gave a tremendous impetus to the Hyderabad struggle. Touching scenes in villages and towns on the border lines of C.P. and Berar and Bombay provinces and on the banks of the Penganga at Umarkhed in Berar were witnessed on those occasions. One of the most touching incidents at one of these mammoth meetings took place when the tribal leaders of the forest dwellers—Pardhis—devotionally honoured Savarkar with a rough woollen blanket and a lathi in their tribal fashion.

Savarkar's thrilling voice was then heard, giving a send-off to several batches of volunteers who entered the Hyderabad State to offer civil resistance. Nearly 15,000 volunteers, workers and leaders were suffering imprisonment for having offered the civil resistance. Senapati Bapat, Sri L. B. Bhopatkar, Sri S. R. *alias* Mamarao Date, Dr. Paranjpe, Sri D. K. Sathe, Sri Anantrao Gadre and Sri Bapurao Joshi from Maharashtra, and Sri Chandakiran Sarada, Mahashay Krishna, Pandit Narayan Swami, and Baba Madansingh Gaga from other provinces led battalions of civil resisters into the Hyderabad State and Yeshwantrao Joshi, the leader of the Hindu Sabha in Hyderabad, with his colleagues had already been arrested and sentenced by the State bureaucracy. Pandit Nathuram Godse, who was the Secretary of the Pratikar Mandal established at Poona under the Presidentship of Sri G. V. Ketkar, Editor *Mahratta*, had led the first batch of civil resisters from Maharashtra into Hyderabad, the administratively most dangerous State in India.

During this Movement there was complete co-operation

between the Hindu Mahasabha and the Arya Samaj in spite of the wily hindrances created by topmost Congress leaders, callous misrepresentations made by the so-called nationalist-cum-Congress press, unsympathetic attitude of the Provincial Congress Ministries and the non-embarrassment policy of Gandhiji. On April 5, 1939, Savarkar successfully foiled in a fighting speech the plans of Gandhiji at the Sholapur Aryan Conference which was on the verge of withdrawing the civil Resistance Movement in pursuance of Gandhiji's draft resolution! Gandhiji was so sure of the withdrawal of the Movement by the Arya Samaj that he even saw Dr. Moonje in Delhi, told him about the draft resolution, and asked Moonje to wire to Savarkar to follow suit. Dr. Moonje told Gandhiji that Gandhiji should not trouble himself about the Movement started by the Hindu Mahasabha and added that Savarkar knew best how and where to stop it.

As was their wont, the Congressmen were then busy supporting the Muslim struggle against the Kashmir State. Except the weak-need policy of their prototypes in the Hyderabad State who stopped their struggle in the State on instructions from the Congress High Command and Gandhiji, they never seriously denounced the medieval barbarism and misrule of Hyderabad State, which had assaulted several Hindu civil resisters in its jails and put to death about a dozen of them in the jails. Though the Congress journals and leaders kept themselves unconcerned with the struggle against the Hyderabad State, the agitation reached the British Parliament. In the British Parliament Col. Wedgwood raised the question of Hyderabad struggle carried on by the Hindu Sanghatanists, and the same day Sri Bhide Guruji hoisted the Geruva flag on the British Residency at Hyderabad.

After a prolonged struggle H.E.H. the Nizam was brought to his knees and in accordance with his traditional policy bowed down to save his Gadi before he was completely beaten. On the 19th of July 1939, H.E.H. the Nizam declared the reforms wherein he gave recognition to the Civil Resistance Movement, and offered to the Hindus at least 50 per cent of the seats in the elected Legislatures wherein formerly the Hindus had zero per cent representation. Savarkar who

smelt the coming sweep of World War II withdrew the movement after this partial success. The Arya Samaj followed suit. This successful termination of the struggle for the civic, political, economic and religious rights of the Hindus and Sikhs, who were totally suppressed in the Hyderabad State, was a new feather in Savarkar's cap and added prestige and power to his leadership. Through the struggle Savarkar felt the pulse of Maharashtra. The undying spirit of Shivaji and Tilak was not yet dead there and Savarkar experienced that spirit again revolting against tyranny and injustice.

Now all was not well with the Congress and its lead. Owing to the growing popularity of the Hindu Mahasabha under the lead of Savarkar, the Congress High Command resolved to boycott the Hindu Mahasabha. This was an amazing stand taken by the Congress lead. But no Mahasabhaite worth the name worried himself about this boycott.

In the last week of September 1939, Savarkar visited a few places in Karnatak. He spoke in the Municipal Hall and in the Karnatak college at Dharwar, and addressed meetings at Hubli and some other villages like Hosur, Gurla Hosur, Bail Hongul and gave a fillip to the Hindu Sanghatan work. Savarkar's next visit outside Maharashtra was to Meerut in the first week of October 1939, to support the candidature of Maharaja Krishna in the provincial bye-election. There the opposition from the Muslims and Congressmen to the Hindu Mahasabha was smouldering. The Muslims even attacked Savarkar's procession at Meerut and there ensued a deadlock in the street between the two sides. The U.P. police force of Sri Govind Vallabh Pant as expected failed to protect the just and legitimate rights of the peace-loving Hindu processionists, and indirectly encouraged the aggressive nature of the Muslims by forcing the Hindus themselves to abandon the procession.

After Savarkar's arrival in Bombay a statement was issued to the press by seven leaders namely Sir Cowasji Jehangir, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Sir V. N. Chandavarkar on behalf of the Indian Liberals, Savarkar on behalf of Hindu Mahasabha, Sri N. C. Kelkar and Sri Jamnadas Mehta on

behalf of the Democratic Swaraj Party, and Dr. Ambedkar on behalf of the Independent Labour Party. These seven leaders declared: "The Congress and the Congress Governments believe in annihilating all parties and making the Congress the only party in the land, as is the case in Fascist and Nazi regimes—a result which would be a deathblow to Democracy."[1] This timely warning against the developing Fascism had its effect. The Congress papers attacked Savarkar particularly, saying that Savarkar could do nothing but join the Liberals. Sounding a warning with the patriotic men against the Congress Fascism was something unpatriotic, but surrendering the national interests at Jinnah's feet was to the monopolised press a patriotic and national act!

III

Then came a great event in Savarkar's romantic life. The British Power that had exiled him for 27 years thought it fit to interview Savarkar at New Delhi on October 9, 1939, to know his views and policy about World War II. In the course of the interview Savarkar frankly told His Excellency, the Governor-General Lord Linlithgow, that he still was a revolutionary; but as the political situation and strategy demanded it, he was prepared to co-operate in the policy of Militarisation and suggested to Government to keep the Sikh and Gurkha battalions on the North-West Frontiers. He feared, however, that an attack on India would probably be made from the Eastern side. The Viceroy was so much impressed with Savarkar's lucid discourse on the current problems that he expressed to some of his Executive Councillors that Savarkar was possibly the only politician who could ably discuss the war situation from the Indian viewpoint and its major issues in the context of international politics. The Viceroy was also surprised to see that in spite of an unusual record of long incarceration and great sufferings Savarkar was still alert, and clear in thinking and unflagging in energy! In the evening Sir Jagdish Prasad and Sir Ramswami Mudaliar, Members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy, invited Savarkar to a tea-party.

[1] P. R. Lele, *War and India's Freedom*, p. 89.

After Savarkar's interview with the Viceroy, the Hindu Mahasabha Working Committee passed its famous resolution declaring that neither the allies nor the axis powers entered war with any altruistic motives; but they were out for their national or imperialistic ambitions.

The Calcutta Session of the Hindu Mahasabha held during the last week of December 1939, proved to be a landmark in the history of the Hindu Mahasabha and in the life of Savarkar. So great was the enthusiasm that the President-elect had to pass two sleepless nights to attend receptions accorded to him by thousands of people at every important station *en route* to Calcutta. The Howrah station was packed to capacity with anxious crowds of workers and eager public. Cheer upon cheer greeted his arrival. Heaps of garlands were showered upon Savarkar, groups of bands played before the station, and numerous photographs were taken. Eager sightseers lined the roadways waiting to cheer the warrior philosopher. Then followed the largest procession Bengal ever witnessed. Armed Sikh horsemen led the procession. Rose water and scents were sprinkled upon the President-elect by crowds of men and women standing in the balconies, and on the roofs to witness the mammoth procession and have a look at the great leader of Hindusthan. This was the biggest session of the Mahasabha held till then. More than two lakhs of people participated. In his Presidential Address Savarkar reiterated the basic tenets of nationalism, reviewed the problem of minorities, and propounded his doctrine of national co-ordination of class interests.

Savarkar's dynamic personality and his clear-cut thinking and his characteristic fearlessness made an irresistible impression on the minds of thinking men in the country. Their repercussions were echoed through different leading newspapers of India. The *Hindusthan Standard*, Calcutta, remarked: "The president himself is a dynamic personality who radiates hope where there is defeatism, brings cheer where there is distress and calls into play creative energy where there is desolation. The Hindu Mahasabha must be beholden to Providence that it has succeeded after years of wandering in the wilderness in claiming for three years in unbroken succession as its leader and spokesman that high

priest of militant Indian Nationalism who has dreamt dreams and seen visions. . . ."[1]

Bengal's another great journal, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, observed: "Whether one agrees with all his views or not, Mr. Savarkar compels attention by the boldness and clarity of his utterances. He knows no doubt or hesitation. His logic is merciless; his humour caustic, and his irony effective. He is a man with a mission. The faith that burns in him throws a halo all round and he seems as he delivers his message and advances like a conquering hero, sweeping away from his path like cobwebs all time-worn theories and personalities."[2] Sounding a warning to the Congress, the *Amrit Bazar Patrika* further said: "One consideration is that Congress has lost its hold over Bengal. We shall not go into the story today, but it is an admitted fact that it is the non-communal outlook of the Congress which has failed to satisfy the Hindus of this Province" And the paper added: "In Indian politics we have at least a man who is not afraid to call a spade a spade."

Styling Savarkar's Presidential Address as militant, the *Tribune*, Lahore, stated: "The militancy is not only intelligible, but in part defensible as a natural reaction produced in the sensitive Hindu minds by the aggressive Communalism of the Muslim League."[3] The *New India*, commenting on the Address, observed: "Thrice Mr. Nehru was elected as Congress President and thrice has Mr. Savarkar been chosen as the Mahasabha leader. Both have certain qualities in common. Both made great sacrifices for the country and both possess a trenchancy of style which is direct and provocative. Had he been admiitted into the inner cricle of the Congress fold, I am sure, Mr. Savarkar would have become President of that organisation. Whether right or wrong, the man is utterly and downrightly sincere."[4]

Another significant feature attached to the Session was that the Maharaja of Nepal was given a garden party and a Public Address under the signature of President Savarkar on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. Ill-health prevented Savarkar from

[1] Quoted in *The Mahratta*, dated 5-1-1940.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*
[4] *Ibid.*

attending the function. The Maharaja himself honoured Savarkar, when he went to the bedside of Savarkar and had a private talk with him about Savarkar's mission for an hour. During these days Sri N. R. Sarkar also saw Savarkar and discussed the general policy of the Hindu Mahasabha and the politics in India.

During the last week of January 1940, at Malabar Hill, Bombay, Savarkar discussed with the leaders of Parsi community the rights of minorities. Immediately thereafter Savarkar made a tour of West Khandesh in the middle of March 1940. Such was the vitality and energy of Savarkar in those days that he ran through a crowded programme of meetings at several places from Chalisgaon to Daundaiche in a single day. Paying flying visits and making speeches at Takarkhed, Shahade and Prakashe, he came to Talode where the Jahagirdar received him. The public meeting was attended by the leaders of the Bhills. It was during these tours that a Bhill, who had completed his term of punishment in the Andamans, fell at Savarkar's feet. The devotion of the convicts in the Andamans to Savarkar was boundless. The author has seen one Kusha Patil, a convict on his return from the Andamans, paying homage to Savarkar as the 'God incarnate' of the land! Kusha Patil said: "It was through Savarkar's care and kind words that I became what I am today!" After addressing very big public meetings at Nandurbar, Pimpalner and Dhulia, Savarkar returned to Bombay.

In the last week of March 1940, Savarkar left for Salem to attend the Salem Hindu Conference. Receiving addresses of welcome *en route* at several stations, he reached Salem. In the Municipal House he spoke on the importance of military training. At the Conference he spoke on the need for Hindu Sanghatan and military training and exhorted the Hindus to oppose the Muslim League scheme of partition of Hindusthan. He paid his respects to Sri Vijay Raghavahariar, an ex-President of the Hindu Mahasabha, and also once a president of the I. N. Congress, at his residence.

At Madras on the morning of the 25th March, he was given a great ovation. Dr. T. S. S. Rajan, an ex-minister of the Madras Province and one-time lieutenant of Savarkar in his London days met him. In the evening before an audience of

thousands of Hindus Savarkar spoke at the beach on the need of Hindu Sanghatan ideology and the necessity of opposing the scheme of partition sponsored by the Muslim League. In the city he was given addresses of welcome by several associations of Arya Samajists, Marwaris, Sindhis, Gujaratis, etc. On the 26th March 1940, the birthday anniversary of Shivaji, Savarkar spoke on the politics of Shivaji at a mammoth meeting held on the beach of Madras under the presidentship of Dr. P. Varadarajalu Naidu.

After a fortnight Savarkar again left Bombay for his Travancore tour. Unprecedented receptions were accorded to him throughout the state. At Quilon he was honoured as a State Guest. The Changanacheri Municipality accorded him an address of welcome. The leaders of the Christian community interviewed Savarkar. Representatives of the so-called untouchables saw him. At the Hindu Conference held on May 5, 1940, at Changanacheri, Savarkar spoke on the policy of the Mahasabha towards the States and the importance of shuddhi. At Tinnevelly station he was accorded a rousing reception. After a grand procession Savarkar was heard at a public meeting with rapt attention. On receiving addresses of welcome at the stations of Kolipatti, Satur and Virudhunagar, he reached Madura, the Athens of South India. Great honour done only to Great Acharyas was done to Savarkar by the priests of the famous Meenakshi Temple. At Madura elephants, horses, camels headed the procession, carrying the Hindu National flag through decorated streets. Rose water mixed with fragrant sandalwood was sprinkled on the procession. After running through a crowded programme, Savarkar addressed a mammoth meeting in the city and returned to Bombay.

On July 5, 1940, Savarkar had a second interview with the Viceroy at Simla. In the evening Sri Jai Lal, a retired judge of the Lahore High Court, arranged in his honour a tea-party at his residence. Sir Jogendra Singh, an ex-minister of the Punjab, Raja Sir Daljit Singh, Sardar Raghuveer Singh and Sri Justice Varma of the Patna High Court were present. During the discussion Savarkar impressed upon them the need for the Hindu Sanghatan Movement. When Savarkar returned to the Simla Station, he received a telephone

message from H.H. the Jamsahib of Nawanagar, the then Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes in India, requesting him for a meeting, but the same could not be arranged for want of time. On his return journey Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, and Savarkar's one-time colleague, learning that Savarkar was the same train, visited his compartment, and greeted his old colleague and revolutionary party leader in a most touching manner. Sri Walchand Hirachand, the business magnate of India, also met him in the train, and had a long talk with him. In August he attended the death anniversary of Tilak at Poona where he averred in his famous speech that absolute non-violence is absolutely sinful.

After such a strenuous lightning and whirlwind propaganda from the northern to the southern ends of Hindusthan, Savarkar's health began to deteriorate. The whole burden of the party, of propaganda, of co-operation, of correspondence, and of organization rested on him. The wonder was that a frail frame having gone through the ordeals of an unusually long torturous incarceration and rigorous hard prison life in the Andamans could stand such a mighty task! He was the only great leader, besides the two great Congress leaders Gandhiji and Nehru, who could pour out political energy and vibrate every corner of India, but the hardships of Savarkar were to those of the latter pair what Himalayas are to the Satpudas. Savarkar had to struggle against heavy odds, against the greatest political organization under the sun, had to create his party funds and leaders, and had to suffer inordinately for want of press. The sciatic pain in his leg lingered for a long time. In the last week of December 1940, the Annual Session of the Hindu Mahasabha was held at Madura. Savarkar was unanimously elected President by all Provincial Hindu Sabhas despite his ill-health and his repeated appeals to the contrary. He reached Madura in a special train with more than 250 delegates from Maharashtra. He was brought to the dais, reclining in a chair. In his address he dealt with the war situation and the doctrine of non-violence. Those were the days of Individual Civil Disobedience Movement started by the Congress. Some Mahasabhaites felt an itch for some sort of Direct Action against Government, and

to that end a resolution was passed during the Session against Savarkar's will. To Savarkar courting jail alone was no patriotism. He wanted Hindu youths to give impetus to the Militarisation Movement, and get themselves 're-animated and reborn' into a martial race.

On January 19, 1941, Savarkar presided over the Centenary Ceremony of the Public Library of Nasik, and, after making a fitting speech in memory of poet Govind, his former colleague, he unveiled his statue. The Trimbak Municipality also gave him an address.

On the 13th and 14th of March 1941, Savarkar attended and guided the Non-Party Leaders' Conference which under the presidentship of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru urged reconstruction of the Viceroy's Executive Council.

In the meanwhile, the Direct Action Resolution was discussed by the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha at Nagpur and its operation was finally postponed on June 15, 1941, by the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha at Calcutta. This time Savarkar performed the ceremony of laying the slab of Sri Ashutosh Mookerjee Memorial in the Ashutosh Hall at Calcutta. The Kali Mandir priests presented Savarkar with an address. In July 1941, Savarkar attended the Sapru Conference in Poona and spoke on the Akhand Hindusthan Resolution whereupon he not only dominated the Conference, but also took it by storm. He then left for Sangli accompanied by Sri N. C. Kelkar, where he was given a great ovation and addresses of welcome, and where he addressed several meetings. Overcome with Savarkar's inspiring message, tremendous influence and powerful oratory which he likened to the power of radium, Sri Kelkar wrote an editorial in the *Kesari* under his signature wherein he sent forth a forceful appeal asking the Mahasabhaites and the Tilakites to stand by Savarkar irrevocably. On his return Savarkar addressed a mammoth meeting before the Shaniwarwada at Poona on the impending calamity, Pakistan.

In November 1941, Savarkar toured Assam, the far Eastern province of India. At Shillong he was accorded a great ovation. There he was told that Pandit Nehru's attention was drawn to the Muslim influx into Assam, when the Pandit replied that nature hates vacuum. Savarkar told his audience

that Pandit Nehru, being neither a philosopher nor a scientist, did not know that nature abhors poisonous gas !

Then followed in the last week of December 1941, the Bhagalpur Session of the Hindu Mahasabha, the most momentous and eventful of the Mahasabha Sessions. Government had put a ban on this Session under the pretext of maintaining peace and communal harmony in the Province. Savarkar, who had almost withdrawn from the contest for the presidency of the Hindu Mahasabha, was provoked into accepting the presidential office, and he gave a fight for the civic rights and liberty of the people. A hundred thousand workers rushed to the scene, from Rajas to Raises, from millowners to millhands, from Sanatanists to Sikhs, from Jains to the so-called untouchables, carried on the active struggle, and defended the honour of the Hindu flag, the fundamental civil liberties of freedom of speech and freedom of association of the people. Huge demonstrations were made, sudden open meetings were held in breach of the ban, invoking and facing lathi charges, armed mounted soldiers, floggings, bayonets, and imprisonment. Organised fury was witnessed in cities, towns and villages all over the six districts of Bihar which came under the ban.

Many prominent statesmen like Sri Srinivas Sastri condemned this unjust ban. Gandhiji could do it only after having a dig at Savarkar, for he thought that Savarkar had resorted to his weapon of Satyagraha. But the other Congress bosses had nothing to say about it. They were busy contemplating help to China or Spain torn and afflicted by civil wars. Savarkar was arrested at Gaya *en route* to Bhagalpur and put in jail. And yet to the despair of the forces and fire of Government the Session was held in Bhagalpur, when Sri G. V. Ketkar, with the revolting spirit of his grandfather, Lokmanya Tilak, rose to the occasion and read out Savarkar's Presidential Address ! All the thousands of civil resisters including Savarkar were released after a week. This Session is important in many respects. The Bhagalpur Civil Resistance success proved to be an abiding source of strength and self-confidence, and demonstrated that in spite of castes, creeds, sects and sections, Hindudom did pulsate with a common national urge, proving that Pan-Hindu consciousness was

a vigorous reality. Another aspect of the struggle was that it proved to the hilt that even the Hindus by themselves could launch a nation-wide mass movement in defence of the rights of the people.

Along with the militarisation, political and literary movements, the social movement for the consolidation of the Hindus went hand in hand as before. Throughout India Savarkar attended meetings, and presided over conferences held in connection with the removal of untouchability. During his tours he visited societies conducted by and for the uplift of the so-called untouchables, visited their localities, took water, refreshments and dinners at their quarters, inquired into their local grievances and encouraged anti-caste dinners which he had inaugurated since the days of Ratnagiri. At Chanda, Chalisgaon, Nagar, Poona, Lahore, Hyderabad (Sind), Sukkar and Delhi he attended anti-caste dinners. He presided over the Dayanand Dalitoddhar Parishad at Ferozpur (Punjab). At the time of the All-India Sessions of Hindu Mahasabha, big anti-caste dinners were held in Nagpur and later on also in Cawnpore. At Monghyr he dined with the Santhals. At Cawnpore he told the Session during the course of his Presidential Address that banishing untouchability in any shape or form was to win a major battle. Depressed Class leaders from Dr. Ambedkar to Sir Jogendra N. Mandal saw him, and discussed the problem with him.

Another programme Savarkar attended whenever and wherever possible was his encouraging visits to the centres, gatherings and parades of the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh. He encouraged the Sanghites, patronised them, at times advised them not to while away their whole life under incrustation, and asked them to fight for the realization of their ideal.

CHAPTER XIII

Hindu Manifesto or Savarkarism

I

The ideal and ideology which Savarkar laid down and propagated is called the Hindu Sanghatan ideology or Hindu Nationalism or Savarkarism. Although a natural development, an outgrowth and a manifestation of the various views and tenets upheld by several Hindu nationalists jointly, severally or individually, the ideology is put into a form and finally formulated and codified into an integrated doctrine of social and political outlook on life by Savarkar. Savarkar is therefore to this Hindu ideology what Newton is to the Law of Gravitation or Marx to Socialism. Each of them applied his own logic to the diverse views and brought unity in diversity.

According to Carlyle, the merit of *originality* is not novelty; it is sincerity. To him 'the believing man is the original man'.[1] What is absolutely original ? Some say originality is but a pair of fresh eyes. Milton and Shakespeare wrote nothing new. Milton borrowed his description of *Paradise*, of *Satan* and many other parts of his *Paradise Lost* from St. Avi'tus who wrote the *Expulsion from Paradise*. Milton borrowed largely also from Du Bartas.[2] Conceding that Shakespeare found nearly all his material in the writings of others and that he was indebted to others for most of the stories of his plays, in his lecture on Shakespeare, Ingersoll states that 'the question is not, Who furnished the stone, or Who owned the quarry ? but, Who chiselled the statue ?'[3] The originality of the philosophy of Marx has often been questioned as it is said he owed his theory of abolition of private property to Mably; he borrowed his labour theory from Locke and Adam Smith or Ricardo and the theory of exploitation and surplus value and historical materialism from

[1] Carlyle, *Lectures on Heroes*, pp. 118-19.
[2] *Dictionary of Phrase and Fable*, pp. 576-77.
[3] Ingersoll, *Lectures And Essays*, p. 91.

others. But none denies that Marx is the sculptor of socialism. So, too, though there have been great Hindu leaders of pronounced Hindu thought before Savarkar or existed even in his day, none of them advocated all the principles or singly fought for them. They were stone-masons to this ideology, but the sculptor was Savarkar. In modern times Vivekananda, Tilak, Lajpat Rai and Hardayal were looked upon as great Hindu leaders of Thought, who spoke and wrote about Hindu thought. Vivekananda was a great philosopher, who devoted his lifetime and great talents to the unfolding of the Hindu philosophy and propagated it without political bias or a desire to win worldly gain to Mother India. Nevertheless, he was of opinion that a nation in India must be a union of those whose hearts beat to the same spiritual tune.[1] His ideal for India was "an Islamic body with a Vedantic heart."[2]

Conscious of the separatist tendencies of the Muslims, Lajpat Rai, a staunch Hindu leader, held that Hindus were a nation in themselves because they represented a type of civilization all their own. Hardayal wrote in the *Pratap* of Lahore in 1925: "I declare that the future of the Hindu Race, of Hindusthan and the Punjab, rests on these four pillars—(1) Hindu Sanghatan, (2) Hindu Raj, (3) Shuddhi of Moslems, and (4) Conquest and Shuddhi of Afghanisthan and the Frontiers. So long as the Hindu Nation does not accomplish these four things, the safety of our children and great-grand-children will be ever in danger, and the safety of the Hindu Race will be impossible."[3] Tilak, a representative leader of Hindu Thought, had neither the time nor an opportunity to apply his mind to the geographical nationalism of his day. The only seer, who was conscious of this ideology in some way, was Dayananda. But unlike Savarkar, he perhaps held that there was no knowledge beyond the *Vedas*; besides, Dayananda was more a social than a political force.

Sri Bhai Parmananda was a strong advocate of the concept of the Hindu Nation. Swami Shraddhananda and Bhai Parmananda were kin to Lajpat Rai just as Hardayal was kith to Savarkar; but none was kin to Savarkar. There were

[1] Swami Vivekananda, *Lectures From Colombo To Almora*, p. 306.
[2] My Motherland Series, *Sri Ramkrishna Paramahamsa*, p. 16.
[3] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 123.

promoters of Hindu solidarity and advocates of the removal of untouchability in Maharashtra and in other provinces too, before Savarkar. They did their work in their own way according to the demands of their times and needs as saviours of Hindusthan. There were champions of Hindu nationalism amongst the contemporaries of Savarkar. But the ideas of the social reform of Savarkar's predecessors and the politics of his contemporaries found a rare combination in Savarkar. Savarkar held definite thoughts with regard to the rejuvenation of Hindudom. His approach to the Hindu-Muslim problem, the doctrine of absolute non-violence in thought, word and deed, and the foreign policy distinguishes him from all other leaders ; and his radical views about social regeneration and revolution, political concepts and precepts of a nation, economic policy, problem of the national script and Lingua Franca, and his ideas about a World Commonwealth or Humanism form the *Hindu Manifesto* of a social and political system for the Hindus in an outspoken, concise and virile form, sustaining their struggle for existence and enabling them to contribute to the peace and prosperity of the world. No wonder then that Savarkar's monumental work entitled *Hindutva* was acclaimed by Swami Shraddhananda as a message given at the dawn of a new age ; and Savarkar's famous presidential speech at Ahmedabad giving the fundamental principles of the Hindu Nation was hailed by Bhai Parmananda as the Bible of Hindu Sanghatan.

WHAT IS HINDUTVA

The word Hindu is the heart of that ideology, and Hindusthan its geographical centre. According to Savarkar " every person is a Hindu who regards and owns this Bharat Bhoomi—this land from the Indus to the seas, as his Fatherland and Holyland—the land of origin of his religion and the cradle of his faith." Therefore it follows that the followers of Vedism, Jainism, Buddhism, Sikhism and all Hill-tribes are all Hindus. Around this life-centre moves Hindutva which Savarkar defines as not only the spiritual or religious history of our people, but the history in full pervasion. Hinduism is only a derivative, a fraction, a part of Hindutva. Hindutva is

not, he observes, particularly theocratic, a religious dogma or a creed. It embraces all the departments of thought and activity of the whole being of the Hindu race. Forty centuries, if not more, he states, had been at work to mould it as it is. Prophets and poets, lawyers and lawgivers, heroes and historians, have thought, lived, fought and died just to have it spelled thus.[1]

What is Sanghatan? and Why?

This movement is called Hindu Sanghatan and means organization for the solidarity and strength of the Hindu Nation. But what constitutes a nation ?

What Constitutes a Nation?

A nation is a group of mankind which is bound together by some or all of these common ties such as common religion and culture, common history and traditions, common literature, and consciousness of common rights and wrongs, occupying a territory of geographical unity, and aspiring to form a political unit. When a nation realizes this ambition, it becomes a State. A nation may be without a State. A State is a governmental unit and it may have more than one nationality under its rule. By 'nationality', Mr. C. B. Fawcell, the author of *Frontiers—A Study In Political Geography*, understands the group of qualities which characterize the people of any one nation. French nationality, he says, is that group of qualities which distinguish the French from other European people.[2]

Eminent Authors on the Principles

The principal elements instrumental in the formation of a nation are a common past, a common tradition and a will to live together. Renan defines a nation as a social group whose solidarity has been established by the sentiment of the sacrifices made in the past and of those it is still ready to make in the future. In his essay on Nationality he observes

[1] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 3.
[2] C. B. Fawcell, *Frontiers—A Study In Political Geography*, p. 5.

that "a nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. . . . One is the common possession of a rich heritage of memories; the other is actual consent, the desire to live together, the will to preserve worthily the undivided inheritance which has been handed down." Renan proceeds: "The nation like the individual is the outcome of long past, of efforts and sacrifices, and devotion." Prof. Harold J. Laski lays it down that it (nationality) implies a sense of special unity which marks off those who share in it from the rest of mankind. "That unit is the outcome of common history, of victories won and traditions created by a corporate effort. There grows up a sense of kinship which binds men into oneness. They recognise their likeness, and emphasize their difference from other men."[1] Dr. Holland Rose writes that "nationality is at its height a union of hearts once made, never unmade—a spiritual conception unconquerable, indestructible."[2] "In reality," observes Garner, "a nation is not a portion of society politically organised, that is, it is not a State, but in its perfect form it is a portion of a society definitely separated from the rest of the world by natural geographical boundaries, the inhabitants of which have a common civilization, common customs, traits of character and traditions." Mr. Israel Zangwill in his *Principle of Nationalities* discusses some of the factors that constitute a nation, viz. unity of religion, unity of language, possession of common traditions of suffering and of joy. By tradition he means songs, legends, stories attached to heroes, etc. "A nationality," states Durkheim, the Belgian Sociologist, with admirable brevity, "is a group of which the members, for racial or merely historic reasons, wish to live under the same laws and form a State." G. P. Gooch, an eminent historian, in his *Nationalism* dealing with some factors that constitute a nation, observes: "But the strongest of all is the identity of political antecedents; the possession of a national history and consequent community of recollections; collective pride and humiliation, pleasures and regret, connected with the same incidents in the past."[3]

[1] Harold J. Laski, *Grammar of Politics*, pp. 219-20.
[2] Quoted in the *Principle of Nationalities* by Israel Zangwill, p. 28.
[3] G. P. Gooch, *Nationalism*, p. 7.

SAVARKAR ON NATION

All these tenets acknowledged as the authoritative exposition of nationalism vindicate Savarkar's stand that in Hindusthan the Hindus are a nation, and other people are communities and numerically, therefore, minorities. Savarkar observes that " the ancient and modern history of the Hindus is common. They have friends and enemies in common. They have faced common dangers and won victories in common. One in national despair and one in national hope, the Hindus by an admirable process through assimilation, elimination and consolidation are welded together during the aeons of a common life and common habitat." Above all, the Hindus are bound together, continues Savarkar, by the dearest ties, most sacred and most enduring bonds of a common Fatherland and common Holyland. Verily the Hindus, states Savarkar, as a people differ most markedly from any other people in the world than they differ among themselves. All tests whatever of a common country, race, religion, language that go to entitle a people to form a nation, entitle the Hindus with a greater emphasis to that claim.

Savarkar declares that the festivals and cultural forms of the Hindus are common. The Vedic Rishis are their common pride, their Grammarians Panini and Patanjali, their poets Bhavabhuti and Kalidas, their heroes Shree Ram and Shree Krishna, Shivaji and Pratap, Guru Govind and Banda are a source of common inspiration. Like their ancient and sacred language, the Sanskrit, states he, their scripts also are fashioned on the same basis and the Nagari script has been the common vehicle of the sacred writings since centuries in the past.

India is dear to us, further observes Savarkar, because it has been and is the home of our Hindu Race, the land which has been the cradle of our prophets and heroes, and Gods and Godmen. Otherwise, he goes on, land for land, there may be many a country, as rich in gold and silver on the face of the earth. " River for river, the Mississippi is nearly as good as the Ganges and its waters are not altogether bitter. The stones, trees and greens in Hindusthan are just as good or

bad stones and trees and greens of the respective species elsewhere. Hindusthan is a Fatherland and Holyland to us not because it is a land entirely unlike any other land in the world, but because it is associated with our History and has been the home of our forefathers wherein our mothers gave us the first suckle at their breast and our fathers cradled us on their knees from generation to generation," asserts he.

To Savarkar the Hindu nation is an organic growth and no paper-make make-shift. It is not a mushroom growth. It is not a treaty nation. It was not cut to order. It is not an outlandish make-shift. It has grown out of this soil and has its roots struck deep and wide in it. It is not a fiction, he proceeds, invented to spite the Moslems or anybody in the world. But it is a fact as stupendous and solid as the Himalayas that border our North.

Indian and Hindu Nationalisms

The Indian National Congress believed and upheld the territorial nationalism which they called Indian Nationalism. To them a nation meant peoples living on a common land. Whoever came to India, the Arabs, the Jews, the Russians, the Germans, the Portuguese, the Greeks, they formed a nation together with the Hindus, because these new-comers also lived in India. "Congress committed the serious mistake," states Savarkar, "at its very start of overlooking this fundamental, social and political principle that in the formation of nations, religious, racial, cultural and historical affinities count immensely more than their territorial unity." What they called Indian Nation Savarkar called the Indian State, because he believed that the Hindus could form a State with other minorities.

Savarkar found nothing objectionable in the ideal of Indian Nationalism which was in fact, says he, a noble one suited to the Hindu mentality with its synthetic trend, always prone to philosophy with a universal urge. It is also true, he believes, that the ideal of politics itself ought to be a human State, all mankind for its citizens and the earth for its Motherland. But is territorial unity the only constituent of a common Nationality? He replies that not territorial unity, but the

religious, racial and cutural unity is what counts most in the formation of a national unit. The idea of territorial nationality alone was envisaged by the Congressites, who in general preferred to be totally ignorant of Muslim history, theology and political trend of mind. Savarkar observes that "Moslems in general and the Indian Moslems in particular have not yet grown out the historical stage, of intense religiosity and the theological concepts of State. Their theological politics divide the human world into two groups only—the Moslem land and the enemy land. All lands which are either inhabited entirely by the Moslems or ruled over by the Moslems are Moslem lands. To any other land no faithful Moslem is allowed to bear any loyalty." Their Holy-land is far off in Arabia. Their mythology and godmen, ideas and heroes are not the children of this soil. Consequently, their names and their outlook smack of foreign origin. Their love is divided. Their love for India as their motherland is but a handmaid to their love for their Holyland outside India. "The territorial patriots wanted the Hindus to cease to be Hindus at least as a national and political unit. Some of them actually gloried in disowning themselves as Hindus at all. But the Moslems remained Moslems first and Moslems last and Indians never!" says Savarkar.

After the fiasco of the Khilafat, the Muslims exploded the Congress myth of territorial nationalism by migrating to Moslem lands. Greece, Palestine and even Hungary and Poland have thousands of Moslems amongst their nationals. China has crores of Moslems. And still the country of the Poles continues to be Poland, of the Grecians Greece. There the Moslems did not dare to distort them, but are quite content to distinguish themselves as Polish Moslems or Grecian Moslems or Chinese Moslems. But the Indian Moslems never identified their aspirations with the national aspirations of Hindusthan. Gokhale had realised that the 'seventy millions of Mohammedans were more or less hostile to the national aspirations,"[1] and warned Devi Sarojini Naidu that the Hindu-Moslem Unity would never come in their lifetime.[2] Sir Pherozeshah Mehta had warned the British Government

[1] Prof. S. R. Parasnis, *Namdar Gopal Krishna Gokhale*, p. 74.
[2] G. A. Natesan & Co., *Sarojini's Speeches and Writings*, p. 26.

against the unjust Muslim claims.[1] Lala Lajpat Rai had fully realized the danger of the separatist tendencies of the Muslims and Dr. Annie Besant had foretold in her *Future of Indian Politics* as early as 1922 that the primary allegiance of Muslims was to Islamic countries, not to our Motherland," and warned in her memorable words: "In thinking of an Independent India, the menace of Muslim rule has to be considered.[2] As late as 1941, Dr. Ambedkar expressed the same kind of grave doubt about Moslem allegiance to India when he said, "Islam can never allow a true Muslim to adopt India as his Motherland and regard a Hindu as his kith and kin."[3]

So far as the Hindus are concerned, says Savarkar, there can be no distinction nor conflict in the least between their communal and national duties, as the best interest of Hindudom are simply identified with the best interests of Hindusthan as a whole. The truer a Hindu is to himself as a Hindu, holds Savarkar, he must inevitably grow a truer national as well. The Hindus are the bedrock on which the Indian Independent State could be built. He asserts: "A Hindu patriot worth the name can't but be an Indian patriot as well. To the Hindus Hindusthan being the Fatherland and Holyland, the love they bear to Hindusthan is boundless. That is why they predominate in the national struggle that is going on for the overthrow of the British yoke. Even the buried bones in the Andamans would assert this fact." Savarkar further declares that "we Hindus must have a country of our own in the solar system and must continue to flourish there as Hindus—descendants of a mighty people." Hence their solidarity, unity and strength should be kept intact. So Shuddhi for him has not only a religious, but also a political, national and a secular meaning. If the population of the Hindus dwindles and the strength of the other faiths outnumbers them, there would be a serious threat to the building of peace and prosperity, nay, to the very existence of Hindusthan.

Savarkar believes in the resurrection of the Hindus, who have stood by the graves of empires and civilizations that

[1] Sir V. N. Chandavarkar, *Presidential Address at Calcutta*, p. 6.
[2] George S. Arundale, *The Mahratta*, dated 22-7-1942.
[3] Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, *Thoughts on Pakistan*, p. 333.

prospered in other parts of the world. He believes that there is some such virility and staying power inherent in the Hindu race as find few parallels in the annals of the world. Therefore, he observes, that amidst the terrible struggle for existence, which is incessantly going on in the creation, survival of the fittest is the rule. The Hindus survived the national cataclysms because they were found the fittest to survive.

Justifiable Nationalism

To those who say that the concept of the Hindu Nation is parochial, Savarkar asks whether or not the concept of an Indian Nation itself is parochial in relation to the Human State. "Why are you an Indian patriot and not an Abyssinian one, and go there and fight for their freedom? Some Englishmen born in this territory are and may continue to be Indians. Can, therefore, the overlordship of these Anglo-Indians be a Swaraj to the Hindus? Aurangzeb and Tipu, too, were hereditary Indians. Did that mean that the rule of Aurangzeb or Tipu was a Swaraj to the Hindus? No! Although they were territorial Indians, they proved to be the worst enemies of Hindudom, and therefore a Pratap, a Shivaji, a Guru Govindsingh or the Peshwas had to fight against the Muslim domination and establish a real Hindu Swaraj," thus argues Savarkar.

"In fact, the Earth," Savarkar observes, "is our Motherland and Humanity our nation. Nay, the Vedantist goes further and claims this Universe for his country and all manifestations from the stars to the stone his own self. O brothers, the limits of the Universe—there the frontiers of my country lie, says Tukaram. Why then take the Himalayas to cut us off from the rest of mankind, and deem ourselves as a separate nation as Indians and fight with every other country and the English in particular who after all are our brothers-in-humanity!" The fact, says Savarkar, is that all patriotism is more or less parochial and communal and is responsible for the dreadful wars throughout human history.

But according to Savarkar there is an acid test for distinguishing a justifiable nationalism or communalism from

an unjust and harmful one. So long as, states he, a nation or a community tries to defend the just and fundamental rights of a particular nation or a people or a community against the unjust and overbearing aggression of other human aggregates and does not infringe on the equal and just rights and liberties of others, it cannot be condemned or looked down upon simply because the nation or community is a smaller aggregate in itself. But when a nation or community treads upon the rights of sister nations or communities, he continues, and aggressively stands in the way of forming larger associations and aggregates of mankind, its nationalism or communalism becomes condemnable from a human point of view.

Nationalism, says Savarkar, when it is aggressive is as immoral in human relations as is communalism when it tries to suppress the equitable rights of other communities and tries to usurp all to itself. But when Communalism is only defensive, it is as justifiable and human as an equitable nationalism itself. The Hindus, Savarkar reiterates, do not aim at usurping what belongs to others. They do not want any special privileges, but they will not allow themselves to be exploited.

MUSLIMS AND MINORITIES

Savarkar was for Hindu-Muslim unity and contemplated a non-sectarian State for India. He held that it was as suicidal as ridiculous to borrow hostilities and combats of the past only to fight them out into the present, because Shivaji and Aurangzeb had done it.[1] But he justified the past struggle of the Rajputs, the Sikhs and the Mahrattas to overthrow the Mogul rule as he considered, "as long as the Muslims lived in India in the capacity of alien rulers, so long, to be willing to live with them as brothers was to acknowledge national weakness."[2] So he was never prepared to accept the Muslim domination or their demand for vivisection of India. He contemplated that kind of unity which would go to create an Indian State in which all citizens irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion were treated all alike on the principle of 'one

[1] Savarkar, Foreword to *Hindu-Pad-Padshahi.*
[2] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 75.

man one vote.' In this view Savarkar was not far away from the realistic approach of Gokhale, Pherozeshah Mehta, Dr. Annie Besant or Dr. Ambedkar. But Savarkar did not want the majority to go on its knees to the recalcitrant minority. Therefore, he considered that seeking unity on the part of the majority was losing it. To those who believed that the third party, i.e. the British Government, was the hindrance to the Hindu-Muslim unity, he asked, "Who set Muhammad Bin Quasim, Mahomed of Gazni and Aurangzeb to lay India waste with a mad fanatic fury? Were they the creations of the third party, the Britishers?" He warned the Hindu-Muslim unity-hankerers that the real question at the root of the Muslim opposition. displeasure and problem was not a word here or a song there. The Muslims cherished secret designs to disintegrate the Indian State and to create a State within a State or subvert the national State and in the end wanted to brand the Fatherland of the Hindus and other non-Muslim sections in Hindusthan with the stamp of self-humiliation and Muslim domination. He, therefore, denounced this attitude and declared to the non-Hindus and especially to the Muslims: "If you come, with you; if you don't, without you and if you oppose, in spite of you, the Hindus will continue to fight for their national freedom as best as they can."

Savarkar further explained his attitude towards the minorities in general. The Parsees, he stated, amongst the other minorities were by race, religion, language and culture most akin to the Hindus. They had been loyal to India and had made her their only home. They had produced some of the best Indian patriots and revolutionaries like Dadabhai Naoroji and Madame Cama. He, therefore, said that the Parsees would be incorporated into the common Indian State with perfect equal rights and trust.

The Christian minority, Savarkar observed, was civil, had no extra-territorial political designs against India, was not linguistically and culturally averse to the Hindus and therefore could be politically assimilated with the Hindus. Only conversion, he added, should be made voluntary and on a legitimate basis.

As to the Jews in India, he said, they were too few and

had given no political or cultural troubles and were not in the main a proselytizing people. They willed, he continued, to be friendly towards the Hindus who had sheltered them when homeless, and could be easily assimilated in a common Indian State.

Thus the problem of minorities was not at all the problem of all minorities, but the problem of only one minority—the Muslim minority.

And so far as the Muslim community was concerned, Savarkar said, every equitable treatment which an Indian citizen could claim on an equality of footing with others in respect of language, religion and culture, could be given to them, but they should be held as suspicious friends for at least some years to come for their extra-territorial designs.

NATIONALISM AND HUMANISM

Savarkar believes that nationalism is but an inevitable step towards the goal of Humanity and Pan-Human State. Thirty years ago he wrote that he believed in a universal State embracing all mankind and where all men and women would be citizens working for the fruits of the earth, the sun and the land which constitute the real Motherland and Fatherland of Man. In fact he said, the world was our country and humanity was our religion and patriotism. In his youth he wrote that history was to be studied to weld humanity into a World Commonwealth. But while the process and struggle, he said, was going on for welding humanity into a World Commonwealth, the weak people had gone under and the fittest had survived. "Therefore," he warned the Hindus, "before you make out a case for unity, you must make out a case for survival as a national or a social human unit."[1] This made him devote all his energy to Hindu Nationalism as he believed that Hindu consolidation was a step inevitable in the realization of the ideal of a Human State or a World Commonwealth. Savarkar stressed this point in a recent letter to Guy A. Aldred, editor of *The Word*, Glasgow. He said : "I hold that although Mankind must march on through nationalism and federalism, through larger and larger statal incorporations

[1] Savarkar, Foreword to *Hindu-Pad-Padshahi*.

to their ultimate political goal, yet the goal is not and cannot be nationalism but Humanism, neither more nor less. The ideal of all Political Science and Art must be a Human State." "The Earth is our real Motherland, mankind our Nation and a Human Government based on equality of rights and duties is or ought to be our ultimate political goal." This was a message sent by Savarkar to the World Fellowship Institution at Conway, which had chosen him for presiding over their Annual Session in 1944, which he could not do for reasons of health.

Thus being a realist and rationalist Savarkar warned the Hindus in these words: "As long as the law of evolution that lays down the iron command 'that the weak and the cowards are always the victims of the strong and the courageous' is too persistent and dangerously imminent to be categorically denied by the law of righteousness whose mottos shine brilliantly and beautifully—but as the stars in the heavens do,—so long the banner of nationality will refuse to be replaced by that of Universality.[1] Savarkar declared in unmistakable terms that as long as the whole world was red in tooth and claw and the national and racial distinction so strong as to make men brutal, so long if India had to live at all a life whether spiritual or political according to the light of her soul, she must not lose the strength born of national and racial cohesion.[2] Therefore, Savarkar again emphasizes: "As long as every other 'Ism' has not disowned its special dogmas, whichever tend into dangerous war cries, so long no cultural or national unit can afford to loosen the bonds, especially those of a common name and a common banner that are the mighty sources of organic cohesion and strength."[3] He substantiated his point by citing the failure of Buddhism. Though a universal religion without any the least ulterior end in view, it could not, Savarkar observed, eradicate the seeds of animal passions or of political ambitions. He, therefore, asked the Hindus to be on their guard against the Mumbo Jumbo of Universalism and non-violence which crush the

[1] Savarkar *Hindutva*, p. 30.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 19.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 67.

faculty even of resisting sin, crime and aggression, nay, kill the very sense of wrong and the power of resistance.

Savarkar asks the Hindus to take Universalism cautiously. He observes: "What was the use of a universal faith that instead of soothing the ferociousness and brutal egoism of the nations only excited their lust by leaving India defenceless and unsuspecting?"[1] Nevertheless, describing the glory and grandeur of Buddha, he says: "But as *it is, thou art* ours as truly as Shri Rama or Shri Krishna, or Shri Mahaveer had been, and as thy words were but echoes of yearnings of our national soul, thy visions, the dreams of our race; even so, if ever the law of righteousness rules triumphant on this our human plane, then thou wilt find that the land that cradled thee, and the people that nursed thee, will have contributed most to bring about the consummation if indeed the fact of having contributed thee has not proved that much already."[2] What heaps of books and lakhs of preachings on Buddha could not expound, Savarkar did in a paragraph!

So from the point of nationalism, humanism and universalism, Savarkar gives his immortal message to the *Land of Karma*, the land of the Vedas, the land of Rama, Krishna, Buddha, Mahaveer, Vikramaditya, Shalivahan, Pratap, Shivaji, Guru Govindsingh, Banda, Dayananda, Vivekananda and Tilak: "Therefore, ye, O Hindus, consolidate and strengthen Hindu nationality: not to give wanton offence to any of our non-Hindu compatriots, in fact to any one in the world but in just and urgent self-defence of our race and land; to render it impossible for others to betray her or to subject her to unprovoked attacks by any of those 'Pan-isms' that are struggling forth from continent to continent!" "As long as other communities in India or in the world," Savarkar concludes, "are not respectively planning India first or mankind first, but all are busy in organising offensive and defensive alliances and combinations on entirely narrow racial or religious or national basis, so long, O Hindus, strengthen if you can those subtle bonds that like nerve-threads bind you in One Organic Social Being. Those of you who in a suicidal fit try to cut off the most vital of those ties and dare to disown the name Hindu will find to their cost that in doing so they

[1] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 21. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 30.

have cut themselves off from the very source of our racial Life and Strength."[1]

"Thirty crores of people with India for their basis of operation, for their Fatherland and for their Holyland, with such a history behind them, bound together by ties of a common blood and common culture, can dictate their terms to the whole world. A day will come when mankind will have to face the force. Equally certain it is that whenever the Hindus come to hold such a position whence they could dictate terms to the whole world—those terms cannot be very different from the terms which the Gita dictates or the Buddha lays down. A Hindu is most intensely so, when he ceases to be a Hindu; and with a Shankar claims the whole earth for a Benares—*Varanasi Medini*—or with a Tukaram explains 'my country? Oh brothers, the limits of the Universe—there the frontiers of my country lie,'" sings the vedic soul of Savarkar.[2]

II

Relative Non-Violence and Absolute Non-Violence

The peace and prosperity of mankind is the central aim of Savarkarian philosophy. To Savarkar what is conducive and whatever contributes to the human good is moral, justifiable, desirable, and just. To it relative non-violence is a virtue and absolute non-violence is not only sinful, but immoral. Savarkar, therefore, hates the monomaniacal principal of absolute non-violence. A lioness besmeared with a deer's blood suckling her cubs at her breast is his nature's picture. He believes that man could not have saved himself from complete extinction had he not succeeded in adding strength of artificial arms to his natural arms. He tells you that the lesson is branded on every page of history down to the latest page that nations which, other things equal, are superior in military strength are bound to survive, flourish and dominate while those which are militarily altogether weak are politically subjected or cease to exist at all. Who will doubt this truth?

[1] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, pp. 116-17.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 117.

In fact, says Dr. Dean Inge, history is to remain a dismal conjugation of the verb 'to eat' in the active and passive.

Hindu soul aims at equality not only between human beings, but also equality amongst all beings. Therefore Hindusthan preached and practised that strained water be given for horses and even corn-throwing centres be opened in the oceans so that big fishes should not swallow little ones. But while Buddhism was at its meridian, the Huns and the Shaks came down like an avalanche upon India and trampled under their feet Hindu families, their thrones, and their Gods. Pointing this to the Hindus, Savarkar tells them that the Holy land of their love was devastated and sacked by hoards of barbarians, so inferior to them in language, religion, philosophy, mercy and all the soft and human attributes of man and God;—but superior to them in strength alone—strength that summed up its creed, in two words—Fire and Sword! In trying to kill killing India got killed and at last found that palm leaves at times are too fragile for steel. But during the days of Vikramaditya and Shalivahan valour accomplished what formulas had failed to do. Therefore, Savarkar concludes: "We denounce the doctrine of absolute non-violence not because we are less saintly, but because we are more sensible!" The truth of this doctrine was demonstrated later on in practice by the protagonists of the doctrine of non-violence in the measures adopted by them in Hyderabad, Kashmir and elsewhere.

Savarkar is one with the greatest of world thinkers in this view. The controversy between the cult of absolute non-violence and the principle of relative non-violence is age-long. All the saviours of humanity have supported the principle of relative non-violence. In Hindusthan, Manu's immortal epigraphic command that an aggressor must be killed instantly, stands out distinctly. The great Shakespeare lays down that arms are fair when the intent of bearing them is just. Thomas Paine denounced the Quaker cult during the American War of Independence. "I am thus for a quaker," says Paine, "that I would gladly agree with all the world to lay aside the use of arms and settle matters by negotiation, but unless the whole world wills, the matter ends and I take my musket and thank heaven He has put it in my

power. . . . We live not in a world of angels. The reign of satan is not ended, neither can we expect to be defended by miracles." At another time he declares: "Wherefore, if you really preach from conscience and mean not to make a political hobby-horse of your religion, convince the world thereby proclaiming your doctrine to our enemies for they likewise bear arms. . . . Preach repentance to your king and warn him of eternal ruin . . . ye would not spend your invectives against the injured and insulted only, but like faithful ministers, cry aloud and spare none."[1] President Masaryk asked Tolstoy, the Russian apostle of the doctrine of absolute non-violence, why should a peace-loving man void of evil intent be slain and not the man of evil purpose who kills. Savarkar in his immortal work *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, observes: "When Humanity will reach the goal of universal justice, of ultimate beatitude, when the millennium preached by the incarnations, by the Messiahs, and by religious preachers will be an accomplished fact on earth, when the resignation taught by Christ in the glorious words 'Whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also' will be impracticable—because, there will be no one to hit on the right cheek, in such a divine age, if anyone revolts, if anyone sheds a drop of blood, if anyone even whispers the word revenge, then at once, the sinner by this act, by his very utterance, would be eternally damned. For, when truth reigns in every heart, revolt must be a heinous sin. When everyone abhors killing, to shed a drop of blood must be a sin."[2]

Savarkar continues in his rational approach to this problem: "But so long as that divine age has not arrived, so long as the highly auspicious end remains only in the lines of saintly poets and in the prophecies of the divinely inspired, and so long as, even to make that state of universal justice possible, the human mind has to be busy eradicating sinful and aggressive tendencies, so long, rebellion, bloodshed and revenge cannot be purely sinful."[3]

Savarkar believes that revolt, bloodshed and revenge have

[1] Watts & Co., *Some of Paine's Masterpieces*, pp. 35-36.
[2] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 273.
[3] *Ibid.*

often been instruments created by nature to root out injustice and introduce an era of justice. He proceeds: "And when justice uses these terrible means for her salvation, the blame of it does not lie on justice but on the preceding cruel injustice, the power and insolence of which called forth the means. We do not hold the justice which gives the death sentence responsible for bloodshed, but rather the injustice which is taken to the gallows." Savarkar brilliantly concludes: "Therefore the sword of Brutus is holy. Therefore, the *Waghanakh* of Shivaji is sacred. Therefore, the bloodshed in the revolutions in Italy is of fair fame. Therefore, the beheading of Charles I is a just deed. Therefore, the arrow of William Tell is divine. And the sin of brutality falls heavily on the heads of those who committed the provoking injustice." [1]

Savarkar also believes that had the world no fear of revolt, bloodshed and revenge, the earth would have bent under the devil-dance of unchecked robbery and oppression. "If oppression were to be secure," he observes, "from the fear that Nature would, sooner or later, create the avenger of temporary injustice, the whole world would have swarmed today with Tsars and Robbers! But because every Hiranya-Kashipu has his Narasimha; because every Dushshasana has his Bheema; because every evil-doer has his avenger, there is still some hope in the heart of the world that injustice cannot last." [2]

But in India when Savarkar was passing his days in internment the political leaders had made a hobby-horse of the doctrine of non-violence and offered their advice to the insulted, enslaved and the butchered Hindus, supporting indirectly Nietzsche who believed that the resignation of Christianity was meant for the defeated and the down-trodden! In no enslaved country humbled to dust, the doctrine of absolute non-violence has ever been discussed in so dry, dull, futile and longwinded a manner as has been done on the advent of Gandhian leadership in India! This futile discussion and reiteration of this doctrine bankrupted the wit, baffled the brains, benumbed the revolutionary fervour, and

[1] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 274.
[2] *Ibid.*

seduced the hearts of the Hindus, softening their limbs and stiffening the bones of the enemies ! Leader after leader blew hot and cold in the same breath while dealing with this doctrine. Some changed sides, abjured their faith, revoked their statements, and condemned their former patriotism and even previous life. Devi Sarojini Naidu, who sang of the Gandhian doctrine in her later life, had shouted from the Lucknow Session of the Indian National Congress in 1916 : " It may seem a kind of paradox that I should be asked to raise my voice on behalf of the disinherited manhood of the country, but it is suitable that I, who represent the other sex, that is, the mothers of the men whom we wish to make men and not emasculated machines, should raise a voice on behalf of the future mothers of India to demand that the birth-right of their sons should be given back to them, so that tomorrow's India may be once more worthy of its yesterday. . . . The refusal of the privilege, that gifted privilege and inalienable right to carry arms, is to insult the very core of their valiant manhood ! " [1]

Such was the realistic tone of politics of Tilak's India. But these very leaders and patriots like Sarojini Naidu became parrots and perched on the cult of absolute non-violence of Gandhism and made a paradox of their politics by thrusting down the throats of youths the opiates of absolute non-violence in season and out of season. The effect was tremendous and terrible. For a time the revolutionary urge cooled down in the country to a great extent, and people lost even the sense of resisting crime and aggression and at last the emasculated Hindu nation fell an easy prey to the organized and furious Muslim violence, and was torn to pieces ! The lambs resolved to lead a vegetable life, but the wolves were not concerned with their pious resolution ! It was Savarkar alone who raised his mighty voice against this suicidal doctrine and applied most of his herculean energy to the task of warning the leaders and the Hindus against the impending holocaust that was soon to overtake them. Savarkar's was a peculiar Maharashtrian approach. Even the great Maharashtrian saint, Tukaram, sings in a fit of practical righteousness : " Kill

[1] G. A. Natesan & Co., *Sarojini's Speeches & Writings*, p. 78.

the scorpion, the despiser of the worship of God, if it enters the shrine; give tit for tat. No mercy to the wicked."

Revolutions: Why and How

Savarkar's thoughts on the how and why of a revolution are noteworthy.

"A revolution is evolution in leaps."

"Revolutions are not regulated by fixed laws. They are not accurately working machines like clocks and watches. They have their own way of marching. They can only be regulated by a general principle; but they brush away minor rules by their very shock. Revolution has only one watch-word—'Dash on!' All sorts of new and unthought of circumstances might arise during its progress; but one must stop, one must overcome them and press forward." [1]

"There is no other life-killing poison to a revolution than indecision. The sooner and the more sudden the spreading of a revolution, the greater are its chances of success. If delay is made after the first start and breathing time is given, the enemy gets time to guard himself; those who rise prematurely lose confidence, when they see no one joining them; and a clever enemy, profiting by the past, puts obstacles in the way of those who want to rise later. Therefore, to give the enemy time between the first rising and the spreading of a revolution is always harmful to the revolution." [2]

"The destruction of individuals, of society and of Kingdoms is caused as much by anarchy as by foreign rule, as much by the absence of any bond as the presence of cruel bonds. If any revolution forgets this sociological truth it generally kills itself in the end. . . . That revolution which destroys injustice and oppression is holy. But when a revolution roots out one kind of injustice and oppression and plants, at the same moment, the seeds of another kind, it becomes at once unholy and the seeds of destruction accompanying that sin soon put an end to its life. . . . The moment the foreign power is destroyed, in order to guard the country from the evils of anarchy, a constitution liked by the majority of the people

[1] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, p. 159.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 128.

should be at once established and that constitution should be obeyed with reverence by all. In short, the rule should be revolution outside and constitution within, chaos outside and cosmos within, sword outside and law within." [1]

On Foreign Policy

Savarkarism advocates that Indian foreign policy should hinge on a very practical stand, on the principle of serving, safeguarding and promoting the national self-interest. Savarkar avers that it should not depend on isms. The sound principle, he observes, in politics lays it down that no form of Government or political 'ism' is absolutely good or bad under all circumstances to all people alike. He, therefore, thinks it inadvisable to dictate to Germany, Japan, Italy or Russia to choose a particular form of Government. Democracy itself demands that the will of the people must prevail in choosing their own Government. Naturally he holds that all those nations that are friendly or likely to be helpful to the Hindu Nation would be friends and allies of Hindusthan. To him, no academic and empty slogans of Democracy or Nazism or Fascism can be the guiding principle to India's foreign policy. He says we should never hate or love Fascists or Bolshevists or Democrats simply on the ground of any theoretical or bookish reasons. There was no reason, he said, to suppose that Hitler was a human monster because he passed off as a Nazi or Churchill was a demi-God because he called himself a democrat. Savarkar wants Hindusthan to maintain a policy of neutrality towards all nations in the world in respect of their internal affairs or mutual relations with each other.

All nations look first to their own security and prosperity while dealing with international problems. They make or unmake pacts with this end alone in view. Let alone the history of pacts and treaties which Britain made with Indian Princes, what great nations have stood by their pledges ? By an agreement the U.S.A. was pledged to protect Korea. In 1905 Japan swallowed Korea and U.S.A. was the first nation to recognize the Korean conquest ! France and Columbia

[1] Savarkar, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*, pp. 348-49.

know how U.S.A. stood by the pledges given and agreements made wi.h them. The world knows the fate of Nine-Party Treaty of Brussels to stop Japanese Aggression. They orated and adjourned. The history of the Treaty of Rapallo, the Treaty of Berlin, the Treaty of 1933 and the dramatic end of the Non-Aggression Pact of 1939 between Germany and Russia is stunning and shocking. Why, in the last week of December 1948. President Truman declared that contracts were not sacred to Soviet Government. Savarkar believes that a powerful centralised state of Hindusthan will contribute effectively to build up an endurable and enduring peace for the world because her role is neither selfish nor aggressive.

ECONOMIC PROBLEM

As regards the economic problem, Savarkar's approach is at once rationalistic and nationalistic. Savarkar is not an orthodox Hindu, so also he is not a believer in mechanical and orthodox socialism. He is not one with Manu or Marx. According to him man has got a stomach, but stomach is not the man. The Christian maxim that man does not live by bread alone appeals to him. Savarkarism believes in the spiritual truth that racial, cultural, national and several other aspects also go to constitute the human nature. Therefore, he believes that the attempt to interpret all human history and human activities in economical terms alone is altogether one-sided and amounts to maintaining that man has no other urge in him to live but hunger.

Savarkarian outlook on life holds that besides hunger—the problem of bread—man has other appetites as fundamental as that, sensual, intellectual, sentimental, some national, some acquired, some personal, some social, and his Being is complex; so also is his history. Savarkarism considers that the solution suggested to the effect that the economical community of interests provides the only and the best solvent of all religious, racial, national and other antipathies that divide mankind in the world is as superficial as simple. The fact that in Europe, Savarkar asserts, the very races and nations wherein the prophets of this school arose and preached their doctrines and where giant efforts were made to

revolutionize all human institutions and recast them into this economical mould alone; religious, racial and national differences have been assuming formidable proportions and have been persisting to assert themselves in Germany, Italy, France, Poland, England, Spain, etc. in spite of centuries of the most intense propaganda to insist on an economical community of interest, is enough to prove that you cannot altogether eliminate all religious, racial or national factors at a stroke, at a thought! [1]

Those who advance the easy argument 'If but you persuade all to unite on the economic plane and to forget every other superstitious difference as the racial, cultural, etc.' forget themselves, argues Savarkar, that the very 'but' in their argument rebuts the practical utility at any rate, apart from its theoretical soundness. Consequently he warns the Hindus that they must in no case delude themselves with the belief that the economic programme alone will ever suffice to solve all cultural, racial and national dangers that threaten them throughout India. Taking into consideration the special circumstances obtaining in India and the stage of social progress, he thinks, the only school of economics which will suit our requirements in the *immediate future* is the school of Nationalistic economy and styles his economic policy as the national co-ordination of class interests. This immediate programme of national co-ordination of class interests is being practised in free India *in toto* by leaders like Pandit Nehru who were extolled to the skies for many years in the past as 'super' Socialists. What Savarkar defined in 1939, Pandit Nehru and others realized in 1948!

III

SAVARKAR'S INDIA

In short, under the set of circumstances obtaining in India and in the context of the present world set-up, the following ideal is to be realized in the immediate future.

Note.—For quotations cited above without references, please refer to Savarkar's Presidential Addresses at Karnavati, Nagpur, Calcutta and Madura.

(*a*) In Savarkar's India all citizens would have equal rights and obligations irrespective of caste, creed, race or religion provided they avow and owe an exclusive and devoted allegiance to the State.

(*b*) All minorities would be given effective safeguards to protect their language, religion, culture, etc. but none of them would be allowed to create a State within a State or to encroach upon the legitimate rights of the majority.

(*c*) The fundamental rights of freedom of speech, freedom of conscience, of worship, of association, etc. would be enjoyed by all citizens alike; whatever restrictions would be imposed on them in the interest of the public peace and order or national emergency would not be based on any religious or racial considerations alone but common national grounds.

(*d*) One man one vote would be the general rule irrespective of caste, creed, race, or religion.

(*e*) There would be joint electorates.

(*f*) Services would go by merit alone.

(*g*) Primary Education will be free and compulsory.

(*h*) Every minority would have separate schools to train their children in their own tongue; their religious and cultural institutions would receive Government help also for these, but always in proportion to the taxes they pay into the common exchequer.

(*i*) The residuary powers would be vested in the Central Government.

(*j*) Nagari would be the national script, Hindi, the Lingua Franca and Sanskrit, the *Devabhasha* of India.

II

(1) People would first of all welcome the machine age. The handicrafts would, of course, have their place and encouragement. But national production would be on the biggest possible machine scale.

(2) As the peasantry and the working classes form literally the chief source of national wealth, health, and strength, every effort would be made to reinvigorate them and the villages which are their cradle. Peasants and labourers would be enabled to have their share in the distribution of wealth to such an extent as would enable them not only to live with a bare margin of existence, but with the average scale of a comfortable life free from wants. Nevertheless, it would be remembered that they being a part and parcel of the nation as a whole, would share common obligations and responsibilities and therefore would only receive their share in such a way as would be consistent with the general development and security of national industry, manufacture and wealth in general.

(3) As the national capital is under the present circumstances mainly individual and indispensable for the development of National Industries and Manufactures, it would also receive due encouragement and recompense.

(4) The interests of both the capital and labour would be sub-ordinated to the requirements of the nation as a whole.

(5) If an industry is flourishing, the profits would be shared in a *large* portion by the labourers. But on the contrary, if it is a losing concern, not only the capitalist, but to a certain extent even the labourers would have to remain satisfied with diminishing returns so that the National Industry as such would not altogether be undermined by the over-bearing attitude of the selfish class interests of either the capitalists or the workers.

(6) Every step would be taken by the State to protect national industries against foreign competition.

(7) The key industries or manufactures and such other items would be altogether nationalised if the National Government could afford to do so and could conduct them more efficiently than private enterprise.

(8) The same principle would apply to agriculture. Government would take over the land and introduce State

cultivation if it could serve to train up the peasant class as a whole with the use of big machines and would cultivate on a large and scientific scale.

(9) All strikes and lockouts which are obviously meant or inevitably tend to undermine and cripple National Industries or production in general or are calculated to weaken the economic strength of the nation as a whole would be referred to State arbitration and settled or in serious cases quelled

(10) Private property would be in general held inviolate. In no case there would be on the part of the State any expropriation of such property without reasonable recompense.

Thus Savarkar's India would be a democratic State in which the countrymen belonging to different religions, sects or races would be treated with perfect equality and none would be allowed to dominate others or would be deprived of his just and equal rights of free citizenship, so long as every one discharges the common obligation which one owes to the State as a whole.

Hindusthan, the Motherland and Holyland of the Hindus, from the Indus to the Seas would be an organic undivided State. The appellation of this Bharat Bhoomi would remain as Bharat or Hindusthan.

In Savarkar's India none would dare convert Hindus by fraud or force. Everywhere the Indians would be respected as citizens of a great nation. In that India relative non-violence would be regarded as virtuous.

The Hindus would be a casteless society, a consolidated, modernised and up-to-date nation. Their marriage customs would be secularised and voluntary inter-caste marriages would be freely performed. Hindu corpses would be burnt with electricity.

In Savarkar's India science would lead all material progress and things, and would annihilate superstitions There would be a *total* liquidation of landlordism. All the land would belong to the State by and by. All key industries would be nationalized. Agriculture would be mechanized. India would

be self-sufficient in respect of food, clothes, shelter, and defence.

Savarkar's India would have unbounded faith in a World Commonwealth as his political philosophy conceives that the Earth is the Common Motherland and Humanism the patriotism of man, but his India would not go under during the process which leads to the welding of Humanity into a World Commonwealth. In international politics Savarkar's India would help to build world peace and prosperity.

CHAPTER XIV

Differences with the Congress

I

Owing to their stupendous ignorance of and a wrong approach to the Moslem problem, the Congress leaders betrayed a woeful lack of self-confidence in the conduct of the national struggle. This ultimately discredited the prestige and patriotism of the Hindus, undermined the power of the national majority, and mortgaged the destiny of the country to the anti-national forces.

Savarkar's insight perceived this growing danger from the designs of the awakened Muslim mind. He knew that Muslim opposition to the national aspirations was not confined to a song here or a piece of music there. According to him there was a fundamental difference in their outlook on life and literature and in their aspirations for the governance of Hindusthan as a nation. Therefore the first thing Savarkar did was to strive to bring into operation the Federal part of the 1935 Act, and frustrate the Muslim designs. Though the Federal part of this Act, he said, handed over no real power especially in the matter of Military and Foreign policy to the representatives of the people, it offered an opportunity for the realization of national unification of the States and other parts under the British occupation into an organized and corporate whole. But partly being not sure of the party domination at the Centre, and partly being afraid of the opposition led in the field by the youthful left-wing forged by President Subhas Bose, the Congress High Command bypassed the issue of Federation. Not because there was no promise for immediate independence that the Congress did not accept the Federation. The Congress could have fought here, too, to undo the unsatisfactory portion of the Federation.

A shrewd and practical politician as he was, Mr. Jinnah feared that if the Federation came into operation, it would weld India into a unified and united State under which the

separatist designs of the Muslims would be totally crushed. Hence he condemned the Federation Scheme as 'thoroughly rotten, fundamentally bad and totally unacceptable'[1] to the Muslims. In fact, this fear of Jinnah fully justified Savarkar, Bhai Parmananda and Dr. Moonje in their pro-Federation stand which was conducive to national solidarity. Had the Congress accepted the Federal part of the Government of India Act of 1935, it would have made the Central Government an irresistible and irremovable power that would have been the death-warrant of the separatist Muslim ambitions, and would have muzzled the four or five Muslim-ruled rebellious provinces into complete subordination. But short-sighted, irrational and irresolute as its stand was, the Congress lost a unique opportunity to consolidate and strengthen the integrity of India.

About this time World War II broke out. The Federation Scheme was suspended. The Congress party gave up power in all seven provinces, went into wilderness demanding the war and peace aims of the British Government, and launched an individual Civil Disobedience Movement. Mr. Jinnah rejoiced at this and declared in his Presidential Address at the Annual Session of the Muslim League at Madras with great joy: "After the war had broken out the first good news, along with other bad news that we got, was the declaration of the Viceroy that His Majesty's Government are pleased to suspend the All-India Federation Scheme embodied in the Government of India Act, 1935 (cheers). . . . India's future constitution will be considered *de novo*, including the policy and the plan on which the Government of India Act, 1935, was based. That was no doubt a great relief, because it was against that part of the Act that Muslim India was fighting from the very commencement."[2]

When the Congressmen gave up ministries, the Legislatures of the Muslim majority provinces had hardly any Muslim League members. But thanks to the jail-seeking policy of the Congress party, Mr. Jinnah was given sufficient time to consolidate his position and with what little strength he had in those provinces at his command, he soon established League

[1] Z. A. Suleri, *My Leader*, p. 93.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Ministries in five provinces. These Ministries proved a stepping-stone to his future plans and policies. The end of the rule of the Congress party in the seven provinces was hailed by Muslims all over India as the Day of Deliverance. Their Pirpur Committee's report levelled heinous charges against the Congress party. The Congress leaders on their part produced certificates of their good conduct from the British Governors. On top of it all, Mr Jinnah continually voiced that "A parliamentary system based on the majority principle must inevitably mean the rule of the major nation. . . . Western Democracy was totally unsuited for India and its imposition would be resisted by the Mussalmans."[1] The Muslims, Jinnah said, should be treated as a separate nation and not a minority, otherwise there would be *irretrievable* disaster to the country.

The Congress leaders thought that Jinnah was the voice of the Muslim classes and not of the Muslim masses. The Congress party and Pandit Nehru particularly started Muslim mass-contact drive to attract Muslim masses to the Congress. As this reading of the Muslim mind was historically untrue, the Muslim contact movement of Nehru proved to be not only a dismal failure, but also proved to be a Muslim conflict movement. Mr. Jinnah had made no secret of his burning hatred for the concept of the Constituent Assembly of an all-India character. To the Muslims he said: "We do not want in any circumstances a constitution of an all-India character with one Government at the centre. . . . If we once agree to that, let me tell you, the Muslims will be absolutely wiped out of existence."[2]

On September 1, 1939, Britain declared War on Germany 'to save the whole world from the pestilence of Nazi tyranny and in defence of all that was sacred to man.'[3] H.E. the Marquis of Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, proclaimed that India was at war with Germany and expressed that India would fight for human freedom as against the rule of force. Soon after this Gandhiji told the Viceroy that he was not thinking of the deliverance of India, and he broke down before

[1] Z. A. Suleri, *My Leader*, pp. 117-18.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 130.
[3] Churchill on September 3, 1939.

the Viceroy as he pictured before himself the House of Parliament and the Westminster Abbey and their possible destruction. Pandit Nehru on his return journey from China issued a statement at Rangoon declaring that India had no desire to take advantage of Britain's difficulties and was not out to bargain.

The Liberals thought it disastrous if India were to offer help subject to conditions. The Parsees offered prayers and H.H. the Aga Khan appealed for heartfelt, loyal and unstinted service to the cause of the British Empire. Dr. Ambedkar lamented that India had no voice in her foreign policy in declaring war and in the making of peace. He further said that India should remain within the British Commonwealth of Nations and strive to achieve the status of equal partnership therein. He, too, appealed to Government to take steps to prepare Indians for defending their country. The Muslim League offered conditional support asking the British Government to create a sense of security and satisfaction amongst the Mussalmans, and curiously enough urged His Majesty's Government to satisfy the Arab national demands.

As President of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar declared that Britain's claim that she entered war to safeguard the vital principles affecting human freedom was a political stunt so long as she continued to hold India in political bondage. In his interview, on October 9, 1939, he plainly told the Viceroy at Delhi that none of the belligerent powers in Europe including Poland and, above all, Russia was actuated by any moral or human principle of Democracy, or the liberties of the down-trodden or political justice and equality beyond what suited the self-interests of the respective nations and states.

However, Savarkar said that the Hindu Mahasabha felt itself concerned with the issues at stake in the war so far as they were likely to affect the safety and interests of the Hindu Nation. He, therefore, appealed to the British Government to make an unambiguous declaration of granting Hindusthan the status of a self-governing Dominion as an immediate step leading towards the final goal of complete independence and to introduce immediately responsible Government at the Centre based on the democratic principle of 'one man one

vote.' He urged the Viceroy to guard India's Western Frontiers by Hindu forces, to introduce compulsory military training in High Schools and Colleges throughout India (as in England), to start and encourage Rifle Classes, to expand the Indian Territorial Force, to inspire the people of India to feel instinctively that the Indian Army was the Army of the people of India and not of Britain, and he appealed to the British Government not to use Indian forces outside India proper. Savarkar called upon Capital and Labour in the country to utilize the unique opportunity of the European War to capture the markets by working to capacity all the existing industries and by starting new ones and replacing at full speed all foreign articles by *Swadeshi*.[1]

But the main object of Savarkar's war policy was to make Hindus re-animated and re-born into a martial race. It was in this belief that, like Tilak, he had supported from the cellular jail in the Andamans the militarization movement during World War I, and was delighted to hear that his countrymen were allowed to go to Europe in thousands to fight against the best military power in the world. In his youth, he wrote from London in 1906 quoting from the *Spectator* that soldiers could be thoroughly trained in six months, and casting a longing look at the then Boy Army of Britain, he felt that every Indian youth must learn Drill, Riding and Shooting. Long ago, in 1906 Savarkar observed in one of his letters from London that a nation's existence depended upon its political independence. If the nation enjoyed independence, it could make progress. That independence in its turn depended upon the mental and military training the nation imparted to its youths. That was why after his release the first slogan he raised was, "Down with the Arms Act, Start Rifle Classes." Thus it can be seen from this that his militarization policy was consistent during both the World Wars.

Savarkar was the only all-India leader, and the Hindu Mahasabha was the only political party in India that launched an intense propaganda for the militarization of the Hindus and for the industrialization of the country with pure patriotic and political objects during World War II. Long before the

[1] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 146-68.

outbreak of World War II Savarkar had seized every opportunity of bringing to the notice of the nation the woeful want of the military strength of the Hindus whenever he spoke in schools and colleges and even at literary conferences.

Savarkar stressed the need for Hindu militarization in his speeches in Poona, Wardha, Chalisgaon, Delhi, Nagar, Lahore, Hyderabad (Sind), Sukkar and during the war years he sent forth appeal upon appeal and gave an impetus to the movement, explaining his militarization policy at Meerut, Salem, Changanacheri, at Calcutta in the Ashutosh Hall and Scottish College and at Sangli in the Willingdon College. In one of his speeches he said: "Today it may well appear that these men in the armed forces are mere slaves in the pay of a foreign Government; but there can be no doubt that when the crucial moment comes, they will prove themselves real patriots and staunch Hindus." While addressing the students of the Scottish College, Calcutta, he said: "Since the days of our First War of Independence in 1857, it has been the policy of the British Government to keep the army out of politics. Our policy against this should be to carry politics into the army by all possible means and once we succeed in this, the battle of freedom will be won." On another occasion he said: "Forces beyond their control have compelled the British Government to trust you with arms and ammunition. Formerly youths had to rot in cells for being in possession of pistols, but today the Britishers are placing rifles, guns, cannons, and machine-guns in your hands. Get fully trained as soldiers and commanders. Get thousands of mechanics trained into technical experts in building shipyards, aeroplanes, guns and ammunition factories. At another meeting he said: "Why not co-operate when you are gaining? Did you not flout the wily expectation of Lord Macaulay? Then why not welcome this unique opportunity for our own good? You know your enemies. I ask you to join the Army and wield the guns and turn them to the cause of freedom. I tell you this as plainly as I told the Viceroy himself about it. Do not worry about the bonds and agreements. The reverse of those scraps is blank. You can write new bonds and new agreements on it when the time comes. Mind, Swaraj will never come to you, although you cover the whole earth with paper

resolutions. But if you pass resolutions with rifles on your shoulders, you will attain it."

Till the day of Savarkar's whirlwind propaganda for Hindu militarization, military career was the monopoly of the Muslims, who formed the three-fourths of the Indian Army. The realist in Savarkar sensed the danger of the Muslim preponderance in the army in case of internal anarchy and external pressure. With that end in view Savarkar preached militarization so that when the proper time came for the British to quit India, Free India could stand erect with its national army. The editors of the so-called nationalist papers that throve on military contracts and military advertisements of the foreign Government whom they asked to quit, basely enough decried the soldiers as hirelings; their leaders described the soldiers as "rice soldiers," their partymen stigmatized them as mercenaries, and the meanest born amongst them called Savarkar 'a recruit hero'. The worst of it was that those very journalists throve on papers, whose owners throve on Government contracts; those very leaders whose relatives and friends made skyhigh profits out of military contracts; those very persons who paid all sorts of taxes and co-operated with the British Government in conducting the railways and all other departments producing war materials with selfish motives and for paltry things and those followers of Gandhiji whose Gandhi Seva Sangh supplied the military with blankets, were the persons who ignobly attacked now and then Savarkar, who never asked his countrymen to contribute a pie to the war fund and whose propaganda for the Hindu militarization emanated from his selfless, patriotic, and far-sighted policy and anxiety for the welfare of India. What a paradox! What a low level a slave country's reason descends to! In its degraded conditions it often curses the selfless as selfish.

Despite these curses, Savarkar vigorously carried on his propaganda. What of Gandhi-brand jail-seekers, some of Savarkar's flamboyant lieutenants, too, at first could make neither head nor tail of his militarization policy, and were sceptical about it. No wonder then that men who posed as radicals and were outside Hindu Mahasabha looked askance

at this policy. When Savarkar thundered from the Presidential Chair at the Annual Session of the Maharashtra Marathi Literary Conference in Bombay in January 1938, asking the delegates to abandon their pens in favour of guns the wordy parrots of progress grew restless at the re-appearance of Shivaji, who wanted to give them arms to turn them to the cause of freedom. Savarkar shouted in his Presidential Address to the Literary Conference : "The absence of poetry and poets, novels and novelists would not be felt during the coming decade. Austria and China suffered not because they lacked good literature, but because they lacked military power. Did you not hear, O learned men, and scholars, the last pathetic shriek of the President of Austria ? He said, 'We yield under German bayonets' and not under German sonnets."

Savarkar further said : "If literature is a part of the national life, its primary aim ought to be the security of national life. I absolutely admire the advocates of the principle of "Art for Art's sake." But when a theatre is ablaze, it is the duty of the true worshipper of Art to rush out to extinguish the gathering flames. What worth is literature, then, if a whole nation is writhing with pain under the oppressor's heel ? " Savarkar went on : "Did you forget the fate of Nalanda and Takshashila, the seats of learning, and other great libraries that were turned into smouldering ruins ? . . . It was the triumphant sword of Shivaji that made Maharashtra safe for poets and philosophers." He concluded his famous Presidential Address at this Literary Conference : "I say, therefore, with all the emphasis at my command that the crying need of our times is not men of letters, but soldiers. It does not matter even if the whole decade is barren in respect of literature. Let there not be a song sung, or a sonnet composed. But let the streets resound with the thud of the feet of thousands of soldiers marching with modern rifles on their shoulders. A love song here, and a love story there, may come in as a diversion. We know even Napoleon would relax on occasions. Having brought his enemies to their knees, Bajirao I also enjoyed the prattle of love. But it gives me terrible pain to see my country reduced to the Brahmavarta of Bajirao II. My heart breaks with anguish

when I see the vapid emasculated young faces engrossed in love prattles. So my message to you, literary men, is that you should abandon your pens in favour of guns; for literature can never flourish in a slave country. It has been well said that pursuit of science is possible only in a free nation protected by the power of arms."

Independently and in honourable co-operation with the Government the Hindu Mahasabha workers and leaders gave an impetus to the Hindu militarization movement through the Hindu Mahasabha papers they had at their command, from the platform and through the Militarization Boards which they had established independently of Government recruiting machinery. The effect of this intense propaganda was seen everywhere. The Muslim preponderance was effectively checkmated and brought down and the percentage of the Hindus in the army went as high up as seventy.

So powerful was the effect of this propaganda that Sir Ziauddin Ahmed, Vice-Chancellor of the Aligarh Muslim University, in a speech at Poona raised an alarm at the increasing number of Hindus enlisting daily in the Land, Navy and Air Forces thereby reducing the percentage of Muslims in the fighting Forces. The *Eastern Times*, a prominent Muslim League paper, too, raised an outcry against the march stolen upon the Muslim monopoly and wrote: "The Hindu Mahasabha also has agitated strongly for militarization of the Hindus as a great opportunity and with the active co-operation of the Government, has met with astonishing success." [1]

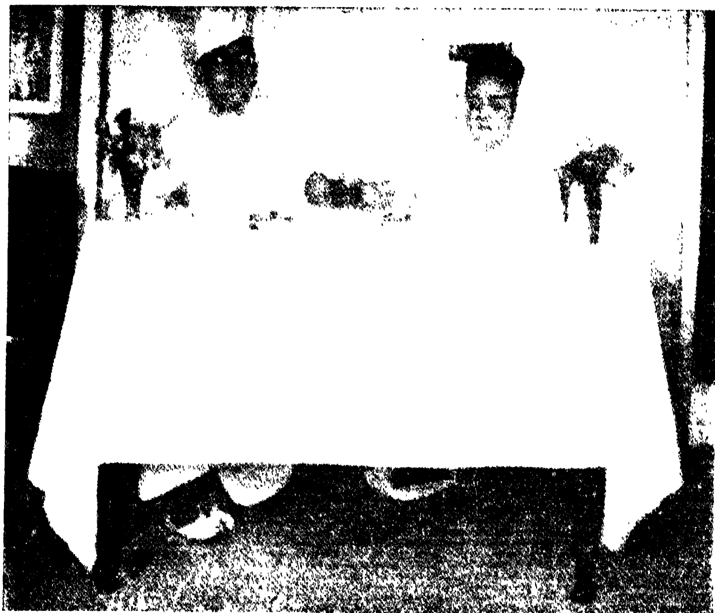
The Muslims and the British Government knew well what Savarkar's militarization movement stood for. It aimed at carrying politics into the military ranks of the Indian Army, and winning over the Army to the side of revolution for the final overthrow of the British yoke. It was, indeed, the military movement of Shahaji to facilitate the mission of his son, Shivaji, for the attainment of Swaraj. Every British statesman knew what Savarkar aimed at. Writing in *Great Britain and the East* in January 1943, Sir Alfred Watson, former editor of the *Statesman*, Calcutta, said: "In his belief of dictatorship, Nehru has a dangerous rival in Savarkar, who

[1] Quoted by Bhide Guruji in *From Quit India to Split India.*

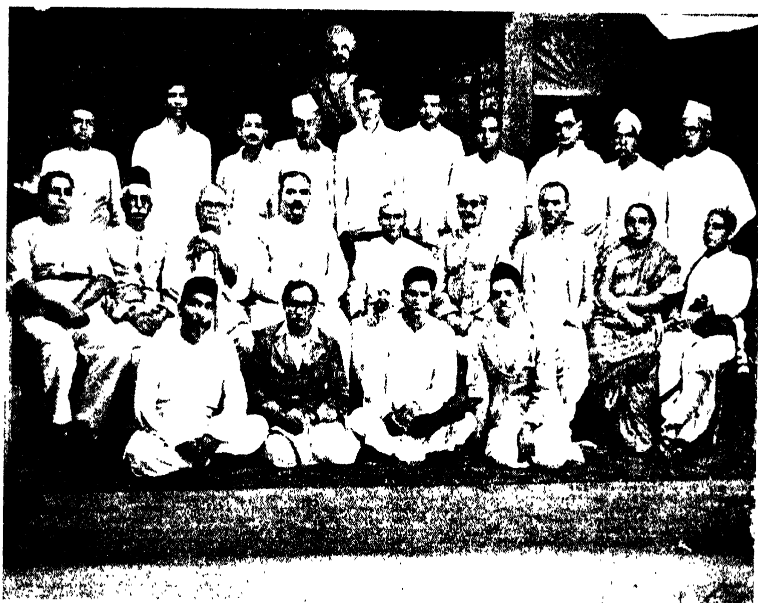
does not hide his aspiration to rule under any veil of anonymity but publicly proclaims it as the leader of the Hindu Sabha." Sir Alfred proceeds: "Savarkar claims domination on the democratic basis of counting heads. For that domination he is prepared to fight and loudly demands that in recruiting for armies in India, the present rulers shall elect a majority of Hindus so that he may have an instrument to enforce his will when the British rule is finally abandoned. If it ever comes to a tussle between Nehru and Savarkar, as seems inevitable, there is little doubt who will win." Except for the reference to dictatorship, Watson's remarks are quite pertinent.

It is well known that Deshgaurav Subhas Bose cherished a loving admiration for Savarkar, and showed reverential respect for him whenever he visited Savarkar, the Prince of Indian revolutionaries. It is also an open secret now that Subhas, the devotee of Shivaji and his politics, had discussed the Indian political and international situation respecting World War II with Savarkar some months before his dramatic escape from India in January 1941. In the course of the discussion Savarkar, the Indian Mazzini, inspired Subhas Bose, the Indian Garibaldi, with the idea of an armed Revolution from outside in order to intensify the struggle for Freedom. The born general in Subhas took the cue, and played the role of the Indian Garibaldi, rightly called the Netaji of the Indian National Army, which was founded by Ras Behari Bose in the East. A world-famous veteran revolutionary and a man of great mental force and a powerful pen, Ras Behari Bose, who was the guide and sole adviser of the Azad Hind Government of Subhas Bose, was in correspondence with Savarkar till the outbreak of World War II, was President of the Japan Hindu Sabha, and had immensely contributed through the Indian League of Independence to the forces of the Indian Freedom Movement outside India. Netaji Subhas, the I.N.A. and India owe a debt of deep gratitude to Ras Behari Bose, the great figure of Indian Revolution.

The leader and the Founder of the I.N.A. both addressed special messages to Savarkar over the Azad Hind Radio. On one of such occasions Netaji Bose gave a broadcast on June 25, 1944, at night over the Singapore Radio and said: "When



Savarkar with Subhas Bose



Savarkar and Hindu Mahasabha Working Committee Members in Bombay (1940)



Savarkar and Cripps

At the time of the Cripps Mission, the Mahasabha delegation meets the Congress delegation





due to misguided political whims and lack of vision almost all the leaders of the Congress party are decrying all the soldiers in the Indian Army as mercenaries, it is heartening to know that Veer Savarkar is fearlessly exhorting the youths of India to enlist in the Armed Forces. These enlisted youths themselves provide us with trained men from which we draw the soldiers of our Indian National Army."

Ras Behari Bose said in his Radio talk addressed to Savarkar : "In saluting you I have the joy of doing my duty towards one of my elderly comrades-in-arms. In saluting you, I am saluting the symbol of sacrifice itself." Paying homage to Savarkar's unexampled sacrifice, untold sufferings and matchless courage, he further said : "I can see God's divine hand clearly behind your unconditional release. You have once more proved your real greatness by propagating the theme that our politics must never depend upon the foreign politics of others. England's enemy must be our friend."[1] Ras Behari concluded with Bande Mataram, reiterating his belief that Savarkar's leadership was the greatest hope inside India. Is any further evidence necessary to prove that the very I.N.A. movement, which Savarkar's opponents exploited, was the outcome of his ideology, politics and his great book on '1857', which provided the I.N.A. with slogans, battle cries, and vision, and inspired them to fight the battle of freedom ?

II

Savarkar's main appeal to the Hindus was that they should elect only those Hindus, who could act openly, publicly and boldly as advocates of the Hindu Nation. The policy of the Congress party in power and in politics was entirely and grossly pro-Muslim. It encouraged the Muslims to be more and more communal, fanatical and overbearing. The actions of the Congress party were more anti-Hindu than their policy on paper, and they trampled upon even the most legitimate national claims and interests of the Hindus. One Congress Ministry asked the Hindus not to play any music whatsoever during the Moharam days. The Congress mutilated the Bande

[1] Ras Behari Bose's message to Savarkar quoted in Indian Independence League's Publication.

Mataram cowardly. In their zest to plead that their nationalism was above suspicion, they vied with one another to prove to the Muslims that the Congressite Ministries had always sacrificed Hindu interests, pandered to the Muslim prejudices and loaded the latter with weightages, posts and positions at the cost of the interests of the national majority. But the more the Congress fawned, the more the Muslims pretended to be oppressed and grew more fanatic.

Savarkar therefore unscathingly attacked this unjust and unpatriotic, servile, senile and placating attitude on the part of Congressmen. To Savarkar trampling the legitimate and just rights of the national majority and favouring others with undue weightages was perverse communalism, false and destructive nationalism. Not that he was not for a fair compromise with the Muslims on a true national basis. He had appreciated the right step taken by Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, the Premier of the Punjab, in regard to the Shahid Gunj affair and said that it was wise for them all to bury the hatchet. Savarkar publicly appreciated the benevolent gestures shown by the Shias in Lucknow regarding the slaughter of cows and the playing of Music on public roads; and expressed the hope that if all non-Hindus would adopt such an honourable, radical and accommodating formula of unity, that kind of mutual co-operation would develop into a common nationality, and common national State cemented with patriotic ties.

But Savarkar never tolerated any unjust or unpatriotic demand on the part of the minorities made overtly or covertly. When the Azad Muslim Conference, held at Delhi in April 1940, opposed the proposal of the vivisection of India, but resolved that the question of the nature and number of the safeguards must be dictated by the minorities themselves, Savarkar appreciated the first part, but denounced the latter part of the resolution as a demand for the pound of flesh. Savarkar believed that patriots fight for their Motherland they love as patriots, and not as mercenaries demanding their pound of flesh. When Sri Rajagopalachari came out with his sporting offer promising the Muslim League Pakistan if they joined the National Government, Savarkar replied indignantly that it was curious to see that " even the Congressite leaders

like Sri Rajaji should fail to perceive that the two terms 'Pakistan' and an 'Indian National Government' were in themselves self-contradictory and self-destructive and how typical it was of the Congressite conception of 'National Unity' that such eminent Congress leaders like Rajaji should have given an open assurance to the Muslims regarding Pakistan long before the British Government even dared to do so. The 'sportive offers' of Sri Rajagopalachari were becoming as much a public nuisance as the 'Inner Voices' of Gandhiji were wont to be.'

Not less infuriated was Savarkar by an article of Gandhiji in the *Harijan* dated the 13th October 1940, wherein Gandhiji stated that in case the British power was overthrown as a result of the war and an internal anarchy set in, "the strongest power in the land would hold sway over all India and this may be Hyderabad for aught I know. All other big and petty chiefs will ultimately succumb to the strongest power of the Nizam who will be the emperor of India." Gandhiji also said in the article: "If you ask me in advance, I would face anarchy to foreign orderly rule whether British or any other. I would unhesitatingly plump for anarchy, say, the rule of the Nizam supported by the chiefs becoming feudatory to him or supported by the border Muslim tribes. In my estimation, it will be cent per cent domestic. It will be Home Rule, though far, far from self-rule or Swaraj."

Savarkar replied[1] that Gandhiji knew as little of Indian History as of Hebrew and stated that though the rule of an Allauddin or an Aurangzeb was also a cent per cent domestic rule, the Hindus detested it as veritable hell and added that any rule of Muslims in future would be similarly hated and overthrown by a new Shivaji, a Bajirao or a Ranjit. As for the Nizam, Savarkar reminded him of the fate of King Amanulla of Afghanistan. How anti-democratic and politically false was the spirit of Gandhiji's article was well demonstrated eight years later by his disciples, Nehru and Patel, who attacked Hyderabad State and smashed the Nizam's ambitious role and his tyrannical un-domestic rule, vindicating the correct stand taken by Savarkar in regard to the Hyderabad

[1] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 239-58.

State in 1939 when he challenged the Nizam's misrule and suzerainty.

III

Another point of difference with the Congress party was the attitude of the latter to the Census. Savarkar believed then that for at least ten years to come, all constitutional progress and matters regarding public services, representation in legislatures, etc. would necessarily be indexed or determined by the figures and information registered in the Census of 1941. He, therefore, condemned the senseless policy of the Congress party in boycotting the Census and said that the Congress policy would hit the Hindus hard.

The numerical strength recorded in the Census of 1941 in respect of the Hindus and Muslims was going to affect political discussions in India as had the Census of 1931 affected the Act of 1935. On the eve of the Census of 1941 Savarkar issued a fervent public appeal to all Hindus including the Bhils Santhals and all Animists to get themselves correctly enumerated. Savarkar announced : " Hindus, wake up ; the hour of the Census strikes." With a great hope and sense of duty, he issued instructions to all District and Provincial Hindu Sabhas to co-operate with the Census authorities, to watch vigilantly the operation, approach the authorities and secure an assurance from Government that Muslim women's number would be scrutinized by Christian and Anglo-Indian lady Supervisors. In a special appeal, Savarkar exhorted the Arya Samajists, Lingayats, Jains and Sikhs that they might show their religion as Vaidic, Lingayat, Jain, Sikh, but they should at least see that they were recorded as Arya (Hindu), Lingayat (Hindu), Jain (Hindu), and Sikh (Hindu) as their religions were of Indian origin, and as they regarded India as their Fatherland and Holyland.

The Congressmen boycotted the Census as they did in 1921 and 1931 and the General Secretary of the Congress, Sri J. B. Kripalani, issued a statement on the eve of the Census of 1941 to the effect that the Congress refused to have anything to do with the Census as it was a communal question. Savarkar retorted that if it was so, how did the Congress beg for votes

at the doors of the communal electorates at the time of elections? Not only that, they even filled in their own castes and religion in the nomination papers. Moreover, it was very strange that these very Congressmen gave recognition to the numerical strength of the Muslims while deciding the political questions of India.

The Congress-minded Hindus respected the Congress mandate and suffered terribly. No wonder then that the Census, which showed Hindus to form 53 per cent in the Punjab in 1881, showed their percentage to be 49 in 1921, 48 in 1931 and 47 in 1941 and simultaneously recorded a rise in the population of the Muslims during the periods from 47 per cent to 53 in the Punjab. In Assam, thirty years ago, the Muslim percentage was 26; in 1931 it rose to 31 and in 1941 to 33.7; and Bengal, which had already suffered a great loss in the numerical strength of the Hindus in the Census on the previous two occasions and had reaped the fruits in the form of the Communal Award, was at last declared in 1941 a Muslim majority province. What the incorrect Census had done to the Bengal Hindus was the result of the criminal negligence of their top-most Hindu leaders, foremost newspapers and illustrious personalities towards the solidarity and correct recording of the Hindu population under the ruinous influence of the Congress. The *Modern Review* in its issues of June and November 1941 disclosed the mischief played by the Bengal Muslim League Ministry in the Census affair, avowing that the Muslims were not in a majority in Bengal and that many Hindus especially the tribesmen numbering about 14 per cent remained unenumerated.

Students of history and politics may note that these very Congressmen who boycotted the Census of 1931 took the figures of the Muslim population as correct while discussing and determining the question of communal weightages, etc. in 1931. It was they who boycotted the Census of 1941 and yet again conducted later on their negotiations with Jinnah and the British Cabinet Mission for determining the issue of Pakistan on the basis of these very census figures the procedure and reliability of which was so doubtful!

IV

Two guiding principles inspired Savarkar through his political career; they were the Independence and the Indivisibility of India. These were the articles of faith with Savarkar and the Hindu Mahasabha. To Savarkar from the Indus to the Seas, India was one and indivisible. In his Presidential Address at the Hindu Mahasabha Session at Ahmedabad in 1937, he stated that the very words, Portuguese India and French India sounded preposterous and insulting to us, and declared that the Hindusthan of tomorrow must be one and indivisible, not only a united, but a unitarian nation from Kashmir to Rameshwar, from Sind to Assam. He believed that the Independence of India was in sight; but he sensed the danger to the integrity of India from the vacillating, servile, deceptive, and short-sighted lead and policy of the Congress in respect of the Blank Cheque offers, the Communal Award, the Simon Commission, the Census, the National Script, the Lingua Franca and the National Anthem.

And as foretold by Savarkar the anti-national forces through the Muslim League came out with a demand for dividing India into separate independent States, and the time for struggling against and suppressing the forces of vivisection came. The Muslim League, at its Lahore Session in 1940, declared "that the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in a majority as in the North-Western and Eastern Zones of India should be grouped to constitute 'Independent States in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign'." The Congress which had till then capitulated to the Muslim League in its communal demands was rightly apprehended by Savarkar to grant the demand for Pakistan. He, therefore, declared that a vote for the Congress was a vote for Pakistan and sounded a warning to the whole nation in April 1940: "A number of Congress leaders of eminence are very likely to go a long way in acquiescing even in this notorious demand of the Muslims to break up the unity and integrity of India and the Indian State, if the Hindus do not repudiate in time the claim of the Congress to speak on behalf of Hindudom as a whole."

And when a year after, he told his audience at Lucknow that there was a move for compromise on the question of Pakistan among the Congress High Command, the purblind Congress press discredited Savarkar for having suspected the peerless patriotism of their holy fathers, and declared with all the force at their command that Savarkar's assertion was an untruth, although subsequently Congress politics literally bore out Savarkar's assertions!

Mr. Jinnah denounced the Hindu Mahasabha in his Presidential Address at the Madras Session of the Muslim League in 1941 as an absolutely incorrigible and hopeless body, and threatened that if the British Government failed to create an independent group of Pakistan States, others would come and do it. Savarkar accepted Mr. Jinnah's remarks about the Hindu Mahasabha as an unalloyed tribute to the unalloyed patriotism of the Hindu Mahasabha, and asked the Congress party to read with open eyes the writing on the wall—the declaration of Pakistan—and warned them not to deceive themselves and to delude the masses by misreading and misunderstanding the demands of the Muslim League.

In his reply to Mr. Jinnah Savarkar further retorted that if the State of the Croats was an ideal and a prototype of his Pakistan, he asked Mr. Jinnah to refer to history about the fate of the Croats, the Serbs and the Slavs, who had been victims of larger States. As for the threat from outside forces, Savarkar replied that the Pan-Islamic alliance would be resisted by a Hindu-Buddhistic alliance from Jammu to Japan and he warned Mr. Jinnah: "Then again, such parasite growths of the Pakistan type are no new experience to Hindudom. During the course of the last five thousand years of its continuous growth and consolidation, this gigantic Octopus of Hindudom has clutched and crushed within the formidable grip of its mighty arms and absorbed a number of Shakasthans, Hunasthans, and the Marathas swallowed and gulped down your very Mogul Empire entirely before it knew what was happening." "The same fate," asserted Savarkar vehemently, "shall these your petty parasites of your Pakistan States meet after a miserable existence for a time, even if they ever come into existence." He then concluded his

historical reply to Mr. Jinnah, "History avers to the ever-abiding truth that in India:

> 'Pakistans may come and Pakistans may go
> But Hindusthan goes on for ever.'

Savarkar then put forth his historical formula for the formation of a united and powerful Indian State. He said: "There is, consequently, only one way for the Indian Moslems to secure their safety, peace and prosperity as a community in India; and that is to get themselves incorporated whole-heartedly and loyally into an Indian Nation which can only be done on the following basic principles:—

> (1) Independence of India and Indivisibility of India as a Nation and State. (2) Representation strictly in proportion to the population strength. (3) Public Services to go by merit alone, and (4) the fundamental rights of freedom of worship, language, script, etc. guaranteed to all citizens alike."

After putting forth the basic principles for an honourable Hindu-Muslim unity and the formation of the Indian State, Savarkar reiterated his famous historic formula, which was the guiding star of self-respecting and rising nation:—

> "On these terms and on these terms alone, if they come, with them, if they do not without them; but if they oppose, in spite of them, the Hindus are determined to continue the good fight for the freedom and integrity of Hindusthan." [1]

[1] Savarkar, *Whirlwind Propaganda*, pp. 359-75.

CHAPTER XV

Roosevelt, Churchill and Cripps

I

Meantime, there was a move in the Liberal Circles to solve the deadlock in their own way. They held a Non-Party Conference in March 1941 at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Bombay. The Convener of the Conference was the late Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. It may be noted here that a few days before this Gandhiji had called on the ailing knight at his residence in Allahabad. Sir Tej was also in correspondence with Gandhiji, and Dr. Jayakar had seen Savarkar in the preceding month. Intellectual and legal luminaries of India attended the Conference. Prominent among those who attended the Conference were Sir Jagdish Prasad, Sir Nripendranath Sirkar, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad, Loknayak Aney, Dr. Moonje, Pandit Kunzru, Dr. Jayakar, Savarkar and Dr. Mookerjee.

The Conference was about to break up since some of the leaders were nervous about the representative character of the Conference. At such a crucial moment Sir Tej requested Savarkar to speak on the point. Addressing the Conference, Savarkar said that they had struck a note in the political history of the country. They had proved that the various parties in India could meet on the basis of a common programme though they had allegiance to different ideologies. As the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, he asserted his belief in India's right to absolute political independence ; but although some of them in the Conference were not prepared to go so far with him, he did not see why they should not travel together so long as they had a common journey. Thus by his calm and convincing arguments he gave a turn to the Conference.

The Conference then set to work and demanded Provisional National Government for India. At the conclusion of the Conference Sir Tej expressed openly his gratitude to Savarkar and acknowledged that Savarkar's valuable guidance and

spirit saved the Conference from a fiasco. It was at this Conference that the Liberal leaders were indelibly impressed by Savarkar's intellectual and persuasive powers and rational and realistic approach to the political problems. Sri Srinivas Sastri happened to meet Savarkar at this juncture. Later on, while speaking at the twenty-third Session of the National Liberal Federation held at Madras, Sastri referred to a meeting with Savarkar at Bombay and said that the speaker was not well acquainted with Mr. Savarkar and had met him only once at one of those infructuous, pacificatory teas, organized by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad. On that occasion the speaker had expected to see a gentleman perverse, obstinate and loud, but found a thin looking, quiet Maharashtra chap, speaking slowly and deliberately, seldom raising his voice and always apparently in full possession of his mind and knowing exactly what he wanted. . . . Sastri further said that he at once conceived a great admiration for the man. Thus at one more political rally Savarkar captivated the intellectual luminaries and lofty brains of India by his reason, intellect and the uncommon range and quality of his mental and argumentative powers.

The reaction of Mr. Jinnah to this Non-Party Conference was notable. From Bangalore he declared that the Conference was engineered by the agents of the Congress and the Hindu Mahasabha. Mr. L. S. Amery, the Secretary of State for India, referred to the Bombay Non-Party Conference in his speech in the House of Commons in April 1941, and said that the Conference had not been able to secure any kind of agreement on the scheme. Replying to the charges levelled by Mr. Jinnah and Mr. Amery, in a statement Sir Tej stated that in his political life he had never been trapped by anybody and said: "I was more than gratified that men like Mr. Savarkar and Dr. Moonje, who were present at the Conference, played the game and accepted the resolution. They were men of strong party convictions and yet, for the sake of settlement, they subordinated their party feelings to the common goal we had in view."[1] Sapru soon saw the Viceroy and was then "thinking, according to the Nainital correspondent of the *Statesman*, of a joint meeting of Gandhiji,

[1] *The Mahratta*, dated 2-5-1941.

Mr. Savarkar and Mr. Jinnah or a small Conference including these three leaders, convened by some persons of influence outside the League and the Congress."[1]

Then came the first breach in the stronghold of the Central citadel of the British Bureaucracy. Lord Linlithgow, the Viceroy of India, reshuffled his Executive Council on July 21, 1941, making appointments of seven Indians. Savarkar opined that the change was a step in the right direction if it was to pave the way for further and rapid development of constitutional progress, and stated that the bitterness felt by patriotic parties in India could not be dissipated unless Britain granted India, if not full independence, at least equal partnership in the Indo-British Commonwealth.

In the wake of these political changes, a second Session of the Sapru Conference was again held at Poona on July 26, 1941, wherein Savarkar got the United India resolution passed by the Conference. At the morning sitting of the Session on that day Sir Mirza Ismail was present, but he was conspicuously absent when the United India resolution came up for discussion in the evening. Savarkar, therefore, pertinently inquired of Sir Tej the whereabouts of his trusted Ismail and Sir Tej with a smile replied that it was true that Sir Mirza Ismail had not turned up as promised. Was the absence of a nationalist Muslim inexplicable at the time of such an important resolution ?

It did not escape the alert eyes of Savarkar that the Viceroy had not done justice to the claims of the Sikhs and the Depressed Classes and therefore he wired to the Viceroy urging him to nominate a Sikh leader on the Executive Council. The non-inclusion of a Depressed Class representative in the Executive Council was rightly resented by Dr. Ambedkar. Savarkar immediately supported the strong protest which Dr. Ambedkar had made in claiming a seat on the Viceregal Executive Council and the Mahasabha President said in his wire to the Viceroy that " the British Government could find no more capable a gentleman to fill that post than Dr. Ambedkar himself."

Savarkar believed that no nation had entered the World War with any idealistic motives and U.S.A. would not

[1] *The Mahratta*, dated 9-5-1941.

translate her slogans of democracy into action by forcing a democratic rule in India. To underline this truth Savarkar sent a cable on August 20, 1941, to the American President, *Mr. Franklin D. Roosevelt, urging him to declare explicitly whether the Atlantic Charter which was announced by Mr. Churchill* and Mr. Roosevelt on August 14, 1941, covered the case of India or not and whether America guaranteed the full political freedom of India within a year after the end of the war. Savarkar further asked President Roosevelt: "If America fails to do that, India cannot but construe this declaration as another stunt like the War aims of the last Anglo-German War, meant only to camouflage the Imperialistic aggressions of those who have empires against those who have them not or are out to win them!"

This cable was broadcast throughout the world, especially in Britain, America, Germany, India, and other belligerent nations. Its implied assertion was fully exploited by Hitler's German propaganda to expose the hollowness of the allied professions of love for democracy! Mr. Churchill, the War-time Prime Minister of Britain, was in the end compelled to tear off with his own hand the mask of vague platitudes. Mr. Churchill declared with his usual blunt candour that the Atlantic Charter applied only to those countries which were then under the Nazi yoke. Savarkar did not leave the matter there. He again cabled to President Roosevelt on September 22, 1941, and asked the President of the great Republic whether he dared contradict Mr. Churchill's interpretation or played a second fiddle to Churchill's dictation by words or silence. President Roosevelt in fact kept silence over Savarkar's pointed question. It was a straight hit that exposed the altruistic motives of the Allies. This Savarkarian trap for the American President was described by the *Modern Review* as a statecraft.

A similar cable Savarkar had sent on April 23, 1939, to President Roosevelt, who had sent forth an appeal to Herr Hitler to ward off the impending colossal danger to the civilization of humanity. In this cable Savarkar had appealed to the American President: "If your note to Hitler is actuated by disinterested human anxiety for safeguarding freedom and democracy from military aggression, pray ask Britain too to

withdraw the armed domination over Hindusthan and let her have a free and self-determined Constitution. A great nation like Hindusthan can surely claim at least as much International Justice as small nations do."

This cable underlined Savarkar's conviction that so far as war was concerned, India need not base her hopes on the professed war aims of the Allies. The Germans flashed this retort of Savarkar to the American President all over Germany as they had broadcast throughout their nation Savarkar's speeches on foreign politics. The frank exposition of this truth was very much appreciated by many candid American politicians one of whom Mr. M. M. Gross wrote to Savarkar from the U.S.A. appreciating his cable to President Roosevelt: "Although there are many who believe as you and I, very few have the courage to voice their feelings as you did. Keep up the work, there will be an international day of peace." Another American of note promised co-operation in publishing Savarkar's viewpoint before the American people.

The popularity and influence of the Hindu Mahasabha was rising and the Hindu Mahasabha was now a force to be reckoned with. Noted politicians, authors and constitutional experts from abroad now interviewed Savarkar at his house at Shivaji Park, Bombay. Towards the end of 1941, Mr. Hudson, the Reforms Commissioner, then officially travelling in India to collect data for the future constitution of India, had an interview with Savarkar. Prof. Reginald Coupland of the Oxford University, who visited India for studying the political constitution of India, met Savarkar along with the Secretary to the Governor of Bombay on January 15, 1942. Mr. T. A. Raman, special correspondent of the North American News Papers Alliance, saw Savarkar during the same month. Mr. John H. Magruder, representative of the *New York Times*, who was on active Naval service in Egypt, had come to India to join the American Navy. He saw Savarkar and discussed the Indian political situation with him. Sir Evelyn Wrench, a representative of the *Spectator*, London, who was on a political survey in India, interviewed Savarkar to acquaint himself with the Mahasabha view on the war situation and the Pakistan scheme.

At this juncture there was a grave crisis in the war situation

for the Allies in the East as well as in the West. On February 11, 1942, Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek of China paid a meteoric visit to India. He was the President of the Chinese Republic and it was said he had come to discuss with the Viceroy of India the war situation in the context of the political situation in India and if possible to persuade the Indian political forces to help the Allies unconditionally in the war. Savarkar greeted the Chinese leader on behalf of the Hindu Nation. In reply the Chinese leader and his wife thanked Savarkar for the good wishes.

Singapore fell shortly afterwards to Japanese forces. With the fall of Singapore and the destruction of the British warships, the *Repulse* and the *Prince of Wales*, it seemed that Japan would smash the allied forces in the East. At this psychological moment Savarkar issued a statement in which he reiterated: "Nothing now can rouse the Indian people with a war-like spirit to fight to a finish, but a bold and unambiguous proclamation on the part of the British Government that India is guaranteed forthwith a co-partnership in an Indo-British Commonwealth with other self-governing constituents including Great Britain herself. Every functional step to nationalise the Government in India and to materialise this proclamation must also be immediately and actually taken." Savarkar also warned the British Government: "If Japan is allowed to forestall the British Government in this case and to proclaim as soon as and if her invading forces reach the borders of India that their immediate objective is to free and guarantee the Independence of India, such a Proclamation on their part cannot but capture the imagination of the Indian people by storm and usher in incalculable political complications."[1] This statement was not a veiled threat. It was the outcome of the rare insight and political wisdom that was soon largely borne out by events.

II

Since 1940, the fissiparous tendencies in Indian politics had begun to assume a threatening aspect. In the first week of March 1942, Sri Rajagopalachari styled the Muslim demand

[1] Statement dated 17-2-1942.

for vivisection of India into a brood of Pakistani States as a 'just and fair share in real power and stated that no Indian politician was interested in denying this.' Savarkar could not let this outrageous assumption go unchallenged. He condemned Rajaji's statement and said : "Rajaji's officiousness is only equalled by his audacity in presuming that he was entitled to play the role of a self-appointed spokesman of all politicians in India and secondly that all Indians who did not think the demands of the Moslem League 'fair and just' were not politicians at all. The League demands that India should be vivisected into a brood of Pakistans. Does that amount only to a desire to have a 'fair and just' share in real power ?" Savarkar warned the British Government that such compromises made by Congressmen were not binding on the Hindu Mahasabha.

On March 7, 1942, Savarkar cabled to the British Premier, Mr. Churchill, urging him "to make a proclamation of the Indian Independence with co-partnership equal with Britain in an Indo-British Commonwealth" and demanded "immediate nationalisation of the Indian Government." The Premier of Britain acknowledged the cable through the Viceroy and thanked Savarkar. About this time there was some talk of a Congress-League pact in which Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan, Prime Minister of the Punjab, figured prominently. Savarkar warned Sir Sikandar Hyat Khan that "any Congress-League pact would not be binding on the Hindus. If it was detrimental to the Hindu rights, it would be opposed by the Hindu Mahasabha."

By now the war situation was worsening for the Allies. Threatened with a grave crisis in war created by the lightning successes of Japan in March 1942, and with a view to impressing the American people with the genuine sincerity of British aims about India, the British Cabinet sent one of their Ministers, Sir Stafford Cripps, to India on March 23, 1942, with a Cabinet proposal. The proposal was a mischievous scheme for the Indian nationalists. The proposal envisaged the creation of a new Indian Union which would constitute a Dominion associated with the United Kingdom immediately after the cessation of hostilities. Secondly the proposal granted the right to any province in British India that was not

prepared to accept the new constitution framed by the constitution-making body, to retain its then constitutional position, provision being made for its subsequent accession, if it so desired.

Cripps interviewed important Indian leaders of public opinion and discussed his scheme with them. Accompanied by Dr. Moonje, Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee, Sir Jwala-prasad Srivastava and Lala Ganpat Rai, Savarkar had a memorable interview with Cripps. Though the first part of the Cripps Scheme was acceptable to Savarkar, he roundly condemned in the interview the second part of the scheme which virtually conceded Pakistan by granting the right of secession to the provinces under the sweet name of self-determination. During the course of the discussion Cripps, the one-time Advocate-General of Britain, opined that the right of self-determination was not new in politics and was given to every unit in Canada before the formation of her federation. To support his case Cripps also cited examples from South Africa and other countries. Savarkar thereupon turned those arguments upon Cripps himself by telling the British Minister that the Canadian States were already quite separate entities before they were called together to say whether they liked to form themselves into an organic State, Federal or otherwise. But here in India, continued Savarkar, unlike the Canadian States, the provinces were already welded into one Central unit and so there was no similarity between the two cases. Savarkar further said to Cripps: "The question before us today is not to form out of separate and independent States or constituents a new nation, or a federation or a confederation. India is already a unitarian State."

Cripps replied that India was never a unitarian nation. Thereupon Savarkar answered back: "To the Hindus, it is an article of faith that India, their Motherland and Holyland, is a cultural and national unit undivided and indivisible. Let alone the cultural unity which you may not grasp during this short period of the interview, but you will agree that politically and administratively the British Government admits it and calls the Government of India the Indian Government, the Army and Navy are called the Indian Army

and Indian Navy, and Bombay and Bengal are called the provinces. All these factors prove that India is an undivided centralised nation and a State. And as for the principle of self-determination, it is a right to be given to a nation as a whole and not to a part thereof."

Savarkar's arguments were irrefutable. The effect was powerful. Caught in his own trap for the first time while conducting political negotiations with Indian leaders, Cripps who set Russia against Germany and enticed many Indian leaders like Pandit Nehru into his snare, hung down his head in silence. The suavity of his manners and sweetness of his tongue faded! In his silence he accepted a defeat at the hands of Savarkar. The interview terminated and Savarkar came out with his face flushed, and he remarked to the pressmen: "We shall fight out Pakistan to the last." So crushing and complete was the defeat inflicted on Sir Stafford Cripps by Savarkar that this interview became a topic among political circles at Delhi for many days. Even the *National Herald*, Pandit Nehru's mouthpiece, referred to this interview in its comments on the proposed retirement of Savarkar from the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha. The *National Herald* remarked: [1] "Profoundly as we disagree with Savarkar's politics, we freely admit that he is one of the few men of our age who have made history and contributed to a reawakening of our people. . . . He showed the old fire in him, when he took up the thoughtless challenge thrown to the Hindu Mahasabha by the Government of Bihar, and obtained a resounding victory at Bhagalpur. With Sir Stafford Cripps he crossed swords which the former will never forget." And indeed the voice of Savarkar will ring in the ears of Cripps for many years to come.

Savarkar advised the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha to reject the Cabinet proposal *in toto* as it was to be accepted or rejected *in toto*, and he left Delhi for Bombay immediately. The Hindu Mahasabha was the first political organisation that rejected the Cabinet proposal entirely. Cripps wanted to have a talk with Savarkar a second time, but Savarkar felt that it was futile to see him and discuss the scheme while the secession clause stood there. Yet Savarkar

[1] Quoted in *The Mahratta*, dated 28-8-1942.

was interviewed again at the Bombay Secretariat by H.E. the Governor of Bombay when Savarkar expressed his view that the Hindu Mahasabha would join the National Government if the secession clause was not binding.

The Muslim League rejected the Cabinet proposal as the freedom of separation was neither full nor clear. The Sikh All-Party Conference rejected it protesting against the principle of provincial self-determination. The Congress party was willing to accept the scheme. Be it noted that in spite of the secession clause which it swallowed, after prolonged negotiations the Congress strained at the gnat of the Defence Portfolio which was to remain in the hands of the British representative during the operation of war, and at last rejected the scheme. Thus it was Savarkar who first opened the Pandora's box brought by the wily, crafty and subtle Cripps full of artificial laugh, while the new expression self-determination had bewitched some men of Savarkar's camp, had accelerated the brainwave of the cool and calculating Sapru-type Liberals, and had visibly affected the spinal chord of the Indian National Congress. The Indian leaders were so thoroughly captivated that they quoted Cripps to silence their opponents!

It is worth mentioning here that eminent Liberal leaders like Sri Srinivas Sastri, Sir V. N. Chandavarkar and veteran statesmen like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Sri Ramananda Chatterjee had sensed the danger to the integrity of India through the suicidal policy of the Congress. Ramananda Chatterjee who presided over a public meeting at the University Institute Hall, Calcutta, on August 22, 1941, said: "I am sure, if we are true sons and daughters of India, it shall never be divided." Speaking at a meeting at the Blavatsky Lodge Hall, Bombay, on the next day of Savarkar's historic interview with Sir Stafford Cripps, Sri Srinivas Sastri appealed to the country to support the Hindu Mahasabha and said: "We all cherish the unity of India and we will all resist any attempt to break up what we take so much pride in. . . . Hindus whether they belong to the Congress, the Liberal Federation, or any other organization will express their sympathy with the Hindu Mahasabha. They should not only rest content with mere sympathy, but also go to the extent

of extending their active political support to the Hindu Mahasabha."[1]

This is a great tribute to the invincible stand taken by Savarkar in regard to the integrity of India and this fervent appeal made by Sastri to all the Hindus for supporting the Hindu Mahasabha clearly meant that Sastri believed that the integrity of India was safer in the hands of Savarkar than in those of the Congress leaders.

And what did the Congress leaders do ?

Mesmerised by the false ideas of the principle of self-determination and impelled by the craftiness of its President, Maulana Azad, the Congress High Command thrust the poisonous pill of Provincial self-determination down the throat of the Indian National Congress, the erstwhile protagonist of India's unity and indivisibility. The Working Committee of the Indian National Congress proclaimed emphatically by a resolution at Delhi in April 1942, " that the Congress could not think in terms of compelling the people of any territorial unit to join the Indian Union against their declared and established will."[2]

This historic resolution brought into bold relief the fact that the Congress favoured the provinces with the right of self-determination or secession and such secession was called by the Muslims ' Pakistan '. Dealing with the Congress resolution four years after, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya had to admit : " It is evident that the passage concedes the division of India into more than one State and gives the go-by to the unity and integrity of India."[3] Is any confession more sinful than this of Pattabhi ? People of the Congress persuasion hoped that Pandit Nehru would oppose the principle of provincial self-determination. But self-determination was a new current of thought in Indian politics and Nehru who was ever on his wings to march with new ideas must fall in line with the provincial self-determination ! It was the shape of things to come and Nehru honestly fitted himself into it !

When this historic resolution of the Congress was out,

[1] Quoted in *The Mahratta*, dated 3-4-1942.

[2] Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 635.

[3] *Ibid.*

Savarkar came out with a statement in which he said : " For the last three years or so I have been publicly warning the Hindus that there was every likelihood that the Congress would servilely surrender to the Moslems on the issue of Pakistan even as it did on the issue of Communal Award and would even have the crazy audacity of parading this treacherous act itself as an acid test of Indian patriotism. The Congressite Hindus continued to challenge and a large section of the non-Congress Hindus also used to doubt the accuracy of these assertions on my part. They wanted evidence to prove my assertions. Now here comes the evidence with a vengeance. Here is an authoritative declaration by the Congress framed in a resolution which they have passed, signed, sealed and delivered to the envoy of the British War Cabinet that they admitted the right on the part of the Muslim Provinces, nay, for the matter of that any provinces whatever, to cut themselves off from Hindusthan and create Independent States of Pakistans or any other *Sthans* they choose." Telling the people to note the dangerous admission on the part of the Congress and its far-reaching treacherous implications, he declared : " The Congress which calls itself ' Indian National Congress ' has in these few lines stabbed at a stroke the unity and integrity of the Indian Nation itself in the back." [1]

For a while there was a tug-of-war between the righteous and unrighteous flanks of the Congress over the anti-national resolution of the Congress. National honesty about the integrity and indivisibility of Hindusthan seemed to move towards the righteous side. In Allahabad at the Session of the All-India Congress Committee on May 2, 1942, the erstwhile Hindusabhaite, Babu Jagat Narayan, moved his Akhand Hindusthan resolution, and it was passed with an overwhelming majority. The A.I.C.C. declared : " That any proposal to disintegrate India by giving liberty to any component State or territorial unit to secede from the Indian Union or Federation will be highly detrimental to the best interests of the people of different States and provinces and the country as a whole and the Congress therefore cannot agree to any such proposal."

Mark the pledged word to Mother India. Mark the holy promise of national honesty and national integrity. But the

[1] Statement, dated 21-4-1942.

Hindu defender of Pakistan in Rajaji would not let the Akhand Hindusthan resolution go unchallenged. He resigned the membership of the Congress Working Committee and moved a counter resolution recognizing the right of separation of certain areas from United India after ascertaining the wishes of the people of such areas. But this Pakistan resolution moved by Rajaji was thrown out on the same day by the A.I.C.C. by 120 votes against 15.

Another factor to be remembered about Babu Jagat Narayan's Akhand Hindusthan resolution is that all the so-called Nationalist Muslim members of the A.I.C.C. opposed it in the A.I.C.C. session, and declared this brave act of theirs in a special statement. Yet the dishonest role of the self-styled saviours of India persisted in its vainglorious platitudes, high sounding words, knavery and hallucinations. When asked by Dr. Abdul Latif of Hyderabad, Maulana Azad and Pandit Nehru replied that the Delhi resolution conceding the right of self-determination to the provinces was not affected by the Akhand Hindusthan resolution ! [1] Had there been five honest, fearless and determined leaders in the A.I.C.C., they could have raised a voice of truth, a cry of righteousness against this violation of the Akhand Hindusthan resolution. This dubious role of the Congress was not a whit less equivocal than the role played by it in regard to the Communal Award. Indeed, History was thus repeated once more in a worse form !

Savarkar could not tolerate the sight of the poisonous dagger of provincial secession aimed at the heart of Hindusthan. He was perturbed at the tragedy that was being enacted on the political platform of India. To Savarkar, unity and integrity of his Motherland and Holyland was an article of faith, a pious and precious sentiment. The Liberal leaders like Sri Srinivas Sastri and Sir V. N. Chandavarkar and many other straightforward men, who perceived the danger to the National integrity, fully supported Savarkar and sounded a note of caution to the country. It was clear now that the goal of the Congress was the independence of a Divided India and the goal of the Hindu Mahasabha and Savarkar was the independence of India and the integrity of India.

Savarkar was restless. He was striving to avert the tragedy.

[1] *Hindusthan Standard*, dated 8-8-1942.

He even tried to focus world attention on the dreadful tragedy that was being enacted in India. The outside world expressed surprise at the Mahasabha opposition to the Cripps proposal. Savarkar, therefore, cabled to the editor, *New York Times*, to acquaint the outside world with the righteous stand of the Hindu Mahasabha that "The Hindu Mahasabha partially accepted the Cripps proposal and welcomed the promised grant of equal co-partnership with Britain; but the scheme made it all conditional on granting freedom to provinces to secede and break up India into a number of independent States with no central Indian Government." Savarkar concluded: "Americans in particular, who went to war even with their kith and kin on the question of secession and saved the integrity of their union, cannot fail to appreciate and uphold the Hindu opposition to the vivisection of India. Hindus are prepared to guarantee legitimate safeguards to the minorities, but can never tolerate their efforts to create a State within a State as the League of Nations put it." Savarkar also warned Sir Stafford Cripps not to depend upon any Congress-League pact as it would not be binding on the Hindu Mahasabha.

CHAPTER XVI

Mahasabha Marches On

I

The Akhand Hindusthan movement was gradually gaining ground. Savarkar's voice was capturing the imagination of the people. Congress influence with the masses was at a low ebb. Even in England and in America the people and the Press evinced interest and eagerness to learn more about the Hindu Mahasabha and its movement, its organization and its leaders. The Hindu Mahasabha was defeating Congress candidates in Municipal, Local and District Local Board elections and bye-elections to the Legislatures. In 1941 the Congress suffered a significant defeat in Maharashtra when Sri Jamnadas Mehta, supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, defeated the Congress candidate in the election to the Central Assembly. In Bengal where the opposition to the Mahasabha came from the Forward Block, the Congress being then a dwindling force there, Sri Ashutosh Lahiri, the General Secretary of the Hindu Mahasabha, defeated the Forward Block candidate in the election to the Provincial Assembly. Sri K. C. Neogy, supported by the Hindu Mahasabha, defeated the Forward Block candidate, Sri Mujumdar, in Bengal in the bye-election to the Central Assembly when a seat fell vacant due to the disappearance of Subhas Bose in January 1942.

At Khamgaon, Patna, Monghyr, Katihar (Bihar), Suri (Bengal), Poona, Mahad, Bhagalpur and Sholapur, there were glowing and growing successes for the Hindu Mahasabha in the elections; so much so that at some of these places there was complete debacle for the Congress candidates and Congressmen withdrew their candidature or fought elections in a personal capacity in order to save the prestige of the Congress in case of their defeats. In Assam the Congress could not even put up a candidate for a bye-election to the Central Assembly and the Hindu Mahasabha candidate,

Sri Anang Mohan Dam, was returned unopposed to the Central Assembly.

The Hindu Mahasabha observed the 10th of May 1942, as an anti-Pakistan and independence day with intense enthusiasm at the behest of President Savarkar. Hundreds of meetings were held all over Hindusthan, in almost all capital cities, Taluka and District towns, protesting against the principle of provincial self-determination and Pakistan. But strangely enough, while the Muslim Leaguers were allowed along with Rajaji to propagate the cause of Pakistan all over India even through public meetings, the Hindusabhaites denouncing the vivisection of India were arrested and gaoled at many places including Nellore, Patna and Arrah (Bihar) for holding anti-Pakistan meetings on that day.

History would record that Savarkar was the only great leader who raised his mighty voice against the internal disintegrating, disrupting forces as well as the external ones threatening India. Not to speak of the Congress leaders, but even Gandhiji assumed a dubious role blowing hot and cold in the same breath. The virtual dictator of the Congress flattered himself with the belief that many pious Muslims had remarked that he was a better Muslim than most Muslims.[1] The symbol of truth and the apostle of Indian democracy advised his countrymen : " Let them (the Hindus) say to the Mussalmans 'have as big a share of the spoils as you want : we will be content to serve you'."[2] The man of justice, equality and universal love further said : " For as a Hindu, I should know that I have nothing to lose even if the referee gave the Muslims a majority of seats in every province."[3] On the one hand the messenger of God stated : " Personally I do not want anything which the Muslims oppose," and on the other hand the god-fearing man in him declared : " I consider the vivisection of India to be a sin."[4] In one voice he said : " Muslim rule is equivalent to Indian Rule. I would any day prefer Muslim Rule to British Rule ;" and in another he said : " For it (proposed Pakistan) means the undoing of centuries of work done by numberless Hindus and Muslims to live

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *To the Hindus and Muslims*, p. 371.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 303.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 133.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 454.

together as one nation."[1] He once believed: "Partition means a patent untruth,"[2] and even did not falter to say: "Vivisect me before you vivisect India."[3]

Lastly, Gandhiji openly declared: "Needless to say, the Congress can never seek the assistance of the British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force, singly or with British assistance, on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them, for it would still be Indian Rule."[4]

Thus when Gandhiji was so uncertain about the unity and integrity of India, his generals like the guileless, sincere and enlightened Dr. Rajendra Prasad naturally searched for the economic safety and stability and political definition of Pakistan instead of opposing the very idea of Pakistan! Dr. Rajendra Prasad honestly and bookishly believed that the riddle would be solved in a Round Table Conference by the policy of give and take. For all his life, his party had given up just claims and ground and taken nothing in return. So why should his party not have such a compromise even on this issue, he seemed to think!

Pandit Nehru declared earnestly that none would come in the way of self-determination of the Muslims after Independence. In his article specially written for the *New York Times Magazine* dated the 19th of July 1942, Pandit Nehru said: "There is now a demand on the part of some Muslims for partition of India, and it must be remembered that this demand is hardly four years old. Few take it seriously."[5] If this is not an example of lack of realism, of a deceptive self-complacency and of an inherent incapacity to probe the depth of political problems, what else is it? Gandhiji influenced many men, but all his influence thus sided with the Pakistanis in effect. It was such a formidable opposition from the adversaries of the unity of India against which Savarkar with his conviction and courage had to stand up for the cause of Akhand Hindusthan. A man of supreme

[1] Mahatma Gandhi, *To the Hindus and Muslims*, p. 415.
[2] *Ibid.*
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 438.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 410.
[5] Quoted by Beverley Nichols in *Verdict on India*, p. 187.

courage, superb insight and spotless sincerity alone always irrevocably stands by a great ideal and Savarkar did it.

In the middle of May 1942, John Paton Davis, Second Secretary of the Embassy of the U.S.A., also attached to the General Commanding Army Forces, interviewed Savarkar. He expressed his opinion to the President of the Hindu Mahasabha that the American Press and the people were realizing the rising influence of the Hindu Mahasabha! In the first week of June 1942, an American Negro leader saw Savarkar, gave him an idea of the Ethiopean movement in America, and narrated to Savarkar the disabilities the Negroes were undergoing in the U.S.A. In the second week of the month came the well-known journalist-author Louis Fischer, to interview Savarkar. He talked to Savarkar as if he had accepted a brief on behalf of the Muslim League whose Fuehrer he had met the previous day. Without any thought he asked Savarkar: "Mr. Savarkar, why don't you concede Pakistan?" Although the tone of the interviewer was impulsive and the manner quite irritating, Savarkar quietly asked Mr. Louis Fischer: "Why don't you grant Negrostan in the U.S.A.?" The American journalist rashly gave him an answer which Savarkar expected him to give, for Mr. Fischer said, "That will be anti-national!" "Exactly, Mr. Fischer, granting Pakistan will be anti-national and undemocratic in India as would be the granting of Negrostan in the U.S.A.!" answered back Savarkar.

Mr. Louis Fischer did not like the defeat in points of arguments and persisted more vigorously than before: "But you must not forget Panipat, if you refuse Pakistan to the Muslims!" Instantly Savarkar reminded Mr. Fischer of the debacle in Dunkirk and Crete. The interview lost its charm and Mr. Fischer had to listen to perturbed and fiery Savarkar armed with irrefutable arguments for his stand. Mr. Fischer was like a fish out of water and never in any future articles did he mention the name of Savarkar. Savarkar's truth was unpalatable to his mind freshly acquainted with the soft pro-Muslim attitude of the Congress leaders. The American journalist did not know that he was crossing swords with the greatest intellectual giant of Maharashtra. Where intellectual giants like Sir Stafford Cripps and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru

were swept away, how could a journalist like Mr. Louis Fischer hold his ground ?

In the same month, Mr. L. Brander, a representative of the British Broadcasting Corporation, London, had an interview with Savarkar, and gained a first-hand knowledge and information about the policy and principles of the Hindu Mahasabha.

In the month of May 1942, a Chinese Muslim Mission toured India, visiting the chief Muslim majority cities, States and Muslim strongholds, and interviewed the highlights of the Pakistani Movement including the Nizam. The Chinese Muslim Mission sent a message to the Nellore Muslims and openly promised help to the Indian Muslims after the end of the war. Savarkar reluctantly exposed the hidden motives of the Chinese Muslim leaders who were wooing the Indian Muslims and imbibing the virus of Pakistani Movement. He also reminded the people of the recent visits of the Chinese Muslims to Turkastan and Egypt to initiate themselves into the Pan-Islamic mysteries and how they, on reaching India had seen Jinnah and the Leaguers, and how they had abandoned their Chinese national dress and paraded the Fez. Savarkar was of the opinion that if the motives of the Chinese Muslims were not checked in time, they would develop in China in the near future separatist tendencies, and would act as a pair of scissors on China.

At this juncture in Sind the Hur menace developed into a national calamity on the Hindu life, honour and property. Savarkar therefore strongly urged the Governor of Sind to stamp out the atrocious activities of the Hurs by any and every means.

Although routed in the A.I.C.C. meeting at Allahabad, Rajaji had now opened a Pakistan Front in the Madras Presidency. Rajaji declared that he had voiced loudly what the Congress High Command only whispered. No less a responsible politician than Dr. Khan Sahib had also averred that the Congress High Command had decided at Ramgarh not to oppose any province or provinces forming a separate independent State or States in India. Savarkar could not tolerate this. He reaffirmed his belief that Rajaji "was the only means of the design of the Congress High Command who were feeling the pulse of India and injecting the pro-Pakistani

virus into the body politic of India. They were playing a double game. If Rajaji failed, it was his own failure. If he succeeded, the success was theirs." Savarkar then appealed to the Madras Province to lose no time in counteracting the nefarious movement of Rajaji by starting a counter propaganda for the unity and integrity of Hindusthan as a nation and a State.

In 1942 Sir Mirza Ismail was appointed Prime Minister of Jaipur. Savarkar had numerous complaints against his past deeds as a premier in Mysore. He therefore said that even if Sir Mirza Ismail was a highly efficient administrator, he would oppose the appointment of Sir Mirza Ismail as the latter during the Dewanship of Mysore had silently packed the police, military and other important services with Muslims. Savarkar reiterated his belief that to give more to the Muslims than what was due to the Muslims on the basis of merits or population was nothing but robbing the Hindus of their legitimate, economic and political rights.

After the tragic failure of the Cripps Mission, the Viceroy expanded his Executive Council partly with a desire to meet the popular demand for Indianization of the Executive Council by appointing distinguished politicians of administrative experience and statesmen of proved ability and high calibre like Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar, Sir J. P. Srivastava—a member of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha, —Sir Jogendra Singh and Dr. Ambedkar.

Savarkar appreciated this move of the Viceroy in spite of some glaring defects inherent in it and declared that Government must offer voluntarily so complete political freedom and power to India as to render it impossible for any enemy of Britain to offer anything more alluring to lead India astray! Savarkar congratulated Dr. Ambedkar, Sir J. P. Srivastava, Sir C. P. Ramaswami Aiyar and Sir Jogendra Singh. Sir Jogendra Singh said in his reply to Savarkar that he trusted that he would continue to enjoy the confidence of the Hindu community which, he added, was no less dear to him than his own community. Sir C. P. Ramaswami, too, thanked Savarkar for his congratulations which he specially appreciated.

II

On a pressing request from the *Hindu Sanghatanist* workers and organizations like the Hindu Sikh Nava Javan Sabha, Arya Samaj, Mahaveer Dal, Sanatan Dharma Mandal, Savarkar visited Kashmir in the middle of July 1942. It was his first visit to Kashmir. On his way to Shrinagar Savarkar was accorded grand receptions and addresses of welcome on various railway stations including Amritsar, Lahore, and Vazirabad. In the Presidential party were Lala Ganpat Rai of Delhi, the Sikh leader—Master Tara Singh, and Capt. Keshavchandra.

At Jammu on July 11, 1942, a very enthusiastic welcome was given to Savarkar by several institutions and organizations and nearly forty thousand Hindus and Sikhs participated in the procession taken out in honour of Savarkar. Next day Savarkar presided over the Hindu-Sikh Conference and addressed a mammoth meeting. After going through a crowded programme for three days in Jammu, he left for Srinagar and reached the capital of Kashmir on July 14. During his stay a host of deputationists, delegations and interviewers waited upon him. He addressed three public meetings one of which was arranged exclusively for ladies attended by over twenty thousand ladies. He was presented with an address of welcome by the ladies of the land of splendour, sun and beauty. Next day he was taken out in another procession in spite of his indifferent health to the banks of the river Vitasta of Vedic and ancient fame. Experiencing the great waves of emotion and enthusiasm of the people, the spirit of Savarkar defied his frailty and he galvanized the vast multitude with his message and mission. To thousands of Hindus Savarkar has been an incarnation of God. At that far end of Hindusthan the Hindus evoked his blessings. Thousands touched his feet with devotion and kissed his hands in spite of his fervent disapproval of these things. Such thrilling scenes of devotion and deification were a common feature of all of Savarkar's tours. And so was it in Kashmir. Savarkar left the capital of the Indian Switzerland despite public and private pressing requests to prolong his

stay. Restlessness and not rest is an outstanding characteristic of Savarkar.

On his way back Savarkar made a brief halt at Rawalpindi. A big reception arranged there was abandoned, but he attended a grand party given by Sir Sitaram in his honour. It was at Rawalpindi that he told the press on the 17th July that Rajaji was labouring under two fundamental errors, viz. that Pakistan would usher everlasting Hindu-Muslim unity and the outcome of a united demand for Indian Independence would be the withdrawal of the British power! Instead of allaying the Muslim hunger for power, Savarkar said, *Pakistan would put them into a more effective position to make further demands. He further declared that the Hindu Mahasabha would never assent to sell its birthright, the integrity of India as a nation and a State for the mess of* pottage of the united Indian demand for Quit India.

The Working Committee of the Congress at its Wardha sitting by this time passed a resolution and agreed to the stationing of allied troops in India to ward off Japanese aggression. The two opposite stands taken by the Congress were inconsistent in Savarkar's opinion, and therefore he said that the Congress indulged in tomfoolery when it said to the British Government: "Quit India but keep your armies here." And indeed this meant reinstallation of the British military rule over India in its much worse form.

On his return to Bombay from the Kashmir tour, Savarkar issued a statement on July 27, replying to the president of Jammu and Kashmir Conference, a pro-Pakistani Muslim body which had presented him with compliments for his clear-cut and well-defined views as contrasted with other nationalist leaders. Since his democratic political convictions admitted of no half measures or mental reservation, the memorandum appealed to Savarkar to say whether he was prepared to apply his popular principle of the majority rule to the problem of Kashmir, and support the claim of the Muslim majority rule in Kashmir! The memorandum in fact was submitted to him when he entered Kashmir and he had boldly and fearlessly replied to the same in an open meeting. But for clarification and assertion, he issued this statement on the problem of Kashmir. Savarkar was not a slogan-ridden

leader. He fearlessly, frankly and squarely answered that his principle laid it down that all citizens who owed undivided loyalty and allegiance to the Indian Nation and State would be treated with perfect equality. They would, he declared, share duties and obligations equally in common, irrespective of caste, creed or religion as representation would either be on the basis of one man one vote or in proportion to the population strength in case of separate electorates, and public services would go by merit

But those who contributed, Savarkar affirmed, to the Pakistani creed or wished to secede from India had no right to the democratic principle of representation in proportion to the population. The Muslims of Kashmir had never publicly or privately declared their consent to apply the same principle of the majority rule to the States of Bhopal and Hyderabad. Further, in Savarkar's view although the Hindus were in a minority in Kashmir, they were a part of the national majority from whom they were not cut off! Thus the false democrats in Kashmir were exposed by Savarkar. Of course, in their slogans for the majority rule in Kashmir, they were supported in no small measure by Pandit Nehru whose attitude towards the Kashmir Maharajah and antipathy towards the Hindus were proverbial!

On the last day of July 1942, Savarkar tendered his resignation of the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha. Owing to the continuous strain for the last five years of the Presidential duties and the whirlwind propaganda, Savarkar badly needed rest. He now thought it fit to shift the burden and responsibility to some stronger and broader shoulders and entrust the leadership of the Hindu Mahasabha to worthy hands. Reviewing the work and prestige of the Hindu Mahasabha in his statement declaring his resignation, he said, "The Hindu has regained once more his national soul and self-consciousness. Witness for example what Prof. Coupland admits in his latest work, *The Cripps Mission*, published by the Oxford University Press. 'The Hindu Mahasabha has come to be a militant organization of the Hindus and has been growing fast in membership and influence.' Sir Stafford Cripps has himself written to me that so influential an organization as the Hindu Mahasabha cannot be left out on any

account when constitutional questions arise. But the most eloquent compliment that can be desired is paid to the Hindu Mahasabha by Mr. Jinnah when he said at Madras in his Presidential Address, 'The Hindu Mahasabha is an absolutely incorrigible and hopeless body, and *I can have nothing to do with it*'." Savarkar further asked the Hindus in his parting message to 'Hinduise all politics and militarize Hindudom.' He also promised that he would ever continue as a soldier in its rank and file and serve the Hindu Mahasabha in any capacity it wanted him to do in furthering the cause of the Hindus.

His resignation was a stunning news to the Hindu Sanghatanist public in India. Hundreds of letters and telegrams soon poured in Savarkar Sadan urging Savarkar not to leave them in the lurch. The Bengal Provincial Hindu Sabha in its message said : " Amidst the universal confusion and chaos you have been the one beacon-light to Hindudom and so long as you would be the President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, the whole of Hindusthan believed that the calamity of Pakistan would never befall their Motherland." Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee wired to Savarkar that his lead was essential in the prevailing national crisis. Meherchand Khanna from the N.-W.F.P. stated that Savarkar's guidance was essential to India at that juncture. In a frantic appeal Sir J. P. Srivastava said that Savarkar's resignation had come as a great shock to the Hindu Sanghatanists all over India, and would injure the Hindu cause. Rai Bahadur Harischandra of Delhi wrote to Savarkar : " It is entirely correct that but for your energy, determination and constant hard work, nobody would have cared or even cared to know about the Hindu Mahasabha in this country and its condition would have been as it had been more than a decade before you resumed the control." The late Raja Maheshwar Dayal from U.P. said : " You have always risked and sacrificed all even at the cost of health. You cannot refuse to guide the nation at this critical juncture." And it was a fact that only Savarkar could work the miracle. It is the man of strong will, says Swami Vivekananda, that throws, as it were, a halo round him and brings all other people to the same state of vibration as he has in his own mind. When a powerful individual

appears, adds Vivekananda, his personality infuses his thought into us. This was true to a letter in respect of Savarkar.

Despite the fact that there were great patriots of long service, great sacrifice and great learning like Devata Swarup Bhai Parmananda, revolutionary leaders of great sacrifice like Sri Ashutosh Lahiri, and representative Hindu leaders of long service and statesmanship like Dr. Moonje in the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar alone could vibrate the entire India soon after he entered the Hindu Mahasabha. In a vast country like India, to be a leader in the true sense of the term is a colossal feat of physical and mental capacity. This is given only to a few. Even the Congress organization during the span of sixty years of its life of service could hardly produce magnetic personalities who could be counted on one's fingers. They were Surendranath, Gokhale, Gandhiji, Jawaharlal Nehru and Subhas. Gandhiji was all political organization, and Nehru all political energy for the Congress. But Tilak and Savarkar were born leaders. Their class was original. Such leaders bring forth original thoughts. They make organizations great unlike others who are made great by organizations which they cling to. Subhas Bose was a born leader, but not a man of original ideas. The role and responsibility which Gandhiji and Nehru played and bore in the Congress, which arose over the talents and toils of Dadabhai, Surendranath, Gokhale, Tilak and Das, fell on Savarkar alone in the Hindu Mahasabha. Savarkar had to begin on a clean slate. There was no other electric personality like Pandit Nehru in the Hindu Mahasabha to strengthen the hands of Savarkar. Dr. Mookerjee was once considered to be so by many, but he eventually broke the backbone of the Hindu Mahasabha when he himself withdrew his candidature at the time of the elections to the Central Assembly in 1945, and ultimately even resigned the membership of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha in 1948 !

III

The resignation of Savarkar from the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha was disastrous and shocking to the forces of Akhand Hindusthan in view of the grave situation that

was developing in Indian politics. The Individual Civil Disobedience campaign having failed to achieve any practical purpose or attract any attention, Gandhiji was obliged to call it off. The Congress was fast approaching a critical situation. Its virtual dictator, Gandhiji, prepared for a short, swift and final struggle for India's freedom. And the All-India Congress Committee awaited marching orders for an open rebellion called the Quit India Movement.

The Liberals deprecated the proposed Congress struggle as inopportune. Dr. Ambedkar despaired of it, and Mr. Jinnah construed it as a direct challenge to Islam! According to Savarkar, the declaration of "Quit India bag and baggage" was attended with colossal absurdity. Gandhiji wished the Britishers to quit India, but agreed to the stationing of their army in India! On the eve of the August Revolution the late Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru declared that none had the right to gamble with the lives and safety of 400 million people. Though he was not a believer, he said, in any separatist cry, he felt the necessity of coming to a settlement with the minorities; that the British should declare that India would have the fullest measure of self-government within a year after the war; that coalition Governments should be formed in the provinces; that Gandhiji, Jinnah, Savarkar and the leaders of all parties should meet in a conference and come to a settlement for the period of the war and set up a machinery for the framing of a constitution for the future and that the Congress should abandon the contemplated struggle.[1] Lokanayak Aney, then a Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council, appealed to Gandhiji and the Congress to convene a conference of leading political parties in the country with a view to presenting a united demand for freedom. Aney said in his speech at the Tilak Mandir, a week before the outbreak of the August Revolution: "Tilak was a firm believer in the integrity and indivisibility of India. This was amply shown by his attitude towards the plan of partitioning Bengal."[2] But with all this Aney's subsequent attitude was quite inconsistent with Tilak's teachings. What must have been the magnitude of the agonies caused to the departed soul of Tilak when his

[1] *The Mahratta*, dated 7-8-1942.
[2] *Ibid.*

brilliant lieutenant, Aney, afterwards wished Jinnah and Gandhiji success in the travail of Pakistan ! And what mental torments Aney's Guru and prophet must have undergone when his worthy disciple congratulated Mr. Jinnah on his becoming the first Governor-General of Pakistan carved out of the vivisected and bleeding Motherland of Tilak !

Savarkar's attitude to the Quit India movement was clear. In his famous speech before the Shanivarwada, Poona, on August 2, 1942, Savarkar complimented the Congress on its having come round to the view of the Hindu Mahasabha that communal unity was not a *sine qua non* for the winning of freedom. He also declared that the Hindu Mahasabha would join the Congress in the contemplated struggle provided that the Congress solemnly guaranteed that it would irrevocably stand by the unity and integrity of India, that the Congress would not make any pact with the anti-national Muslim League, and that the Congress would accept Hindi with the Nagari Script as the Lingua Franca of India. Savarkar, however, put it tersely on the strength of the unquestionable proof he had in his possession that the leader in Gandhiji had always been vacillating and further said that it was his considered opinion that Gandhiji would unquestionably agree not only to one Pakistan in India but to many. Then expressing his unfailing belief in the militarization policy of the Hindu Mahasabha, Savarkar said that if Gandhiji pinned his faith on his fast to secure his demands, it would not be heeded at all by the British amidst the fire and booming of the war. This historic speech of Savarkar was considered to be so important that even the British Broadcasting Station broadcast it from London.

Although the terms laid down by Savarkar for co-operation were reasonable, the Congress and its virtual dictator stubbornly refused to have anything to do with these conditions. Instead, the A.I.C.C. in its fateful Bombay session on August 7, 1942, actually went on placating the Muslims more by declaring that the residuary powers would be vested in the Provincial Governments in addition to the right of self-determination given to the Provinces to secede from the Central State. The climax was reached when Gandhiji, the *de facto* ruler of the Congress, in an authoritative letter to

Mr. Jinnah, said in all sincerity: "Congress will have no objection to the British Government transferring all the powers it today exercises, to the Muslim League on behalf of the whole of India including the so-called Indian India. The Congress will not only not obstruct any Government which the Muslim League may form, but even join the Government."

It is quite clear that in view of this anti-national attitude of the Congress towards the national majority, Savarkar did well in not identifying the Hindu Mahasabha with the so-called all-out struggle of the Congress as its price and inevitable consequences would have been and were in fact afterwards the vivisection of India! Besides, Savarkar was of the opinion that in respect of tactical questions, the timing, the ways, the means, the methods of revolution and above all, the effectiveness which could depend on sane calculations, there was no elaborate planning in advance by the Congress at all. The truth of this remark was realized by many Congress leaders afterwards. Savarkar was not for mere mass upheaval. The historian-leader wanted a pre-planned revolution which would attempt to gain the support of the military. For, no revolution ever succeeded without the backing of the army. This reality was never visualized by the Congress, nor did it even dream of it.

Gandhiji was to launch his all-out struggle for the overthrow of the foreign domination after the A.I.C.C. approval of his plan on the 8th August 1942. But all the Congress leaders including Gandhiji were arrested the same night. As a result of their arrest, popular discontent, mass disturbances and their rigorous suppression by the British Government threw the country into a turmoil. Post offices and railway stations were damaged and destroyed by the Congress underground workers. Telegraph, railway and telephone wires were cut. Rails were removed and a few small bridges were wrecked by youths actuated by patriotic motives.

Yet the marked feature of the struggle was that it was predominantly Hindu and practically the whole of the Muslim sections, Muslim localities, Muslim majority towns and cities, the provinces of Assam, Orissa, the Punjab, N.-W.F.P., and comparatively Sind remained aloof from this revolution. Mr. Jinnah emphasised the Muslim aloofness from this



" But this ' Quit India ' must not end in ' Split India '," said Savarkar, addressing a mammoth meeting before the Shanivarwada, Poona, on August 2, 1942



A mass meeting hearing Savarkar in pin-drop silence at Bombay

movement when he declared in unmistakable terms that the Muslims were opposed to the August revolution, and urged the Muslims to keep away from it. He also warned the August revolutionaries not to meddle with Muslim affairs and provoke them into any counter-revolution.

Savarkar's stand was both patriotic and practical. In a statement issued on the 10th of August he said: "The inevitable has happened. The foremost and patriotic leaders of the Congress including Mahatma Gandhi, Pandit Nehru and hundreds of other leaders of the Congress party are arrested and imprisoned. The personal sympathies of the Hindu Sanghatanists go with them in their sufferings for a patriotic cause." He strongly condemned the drastic measures adopted by the Government to quell the disturbances, and warned the British Government that nothing but an immediate proclamation by the British Parliament granting India the status of a completely free and equal partner in the Indo-British Commonwealth with rights and duties equal with those of Great Britain herself and its immediate realization would solve the problem." He openly sympathized with the patriotic struggle of the Congress Hindus, and their sufferings and the untold calamities from detention to death they faced and underwent. But despite the malicious and mad propaganda against Savarkar by the Congress press for his not joining the revolutionary struggle, his foresight and judgment could not drive him headlong and blindfold into the struggle, the outcome of which, he conscientiously believed, would be detrimental to the interests and integrity of India. Nay, it was his firm conviction that under the lead of Gandhiji, the Congress Quit India movement was bound to end in a split India message. So he said he could not make a common cause with the Congress on a wrong issue that would ultimately lead to national dissolution and devastation, and he could not adopt a line of action for the sake of a united front. He pointed out that even the Congress and Gandhiji never made a united front with the revolutionaries or with the Sanghatanists at Hyderabad or at Bhagalpur although the issues then were of national importance and interests. For Gandhiji and the Congress in their own way believed sincerely that the line of

action adopted by the revolutionaries and the Hindu Sanghatanists was detrimental to the interests of the nation.

Savarkar now exhorted fervently the Hindu Sanghatanists who happened to be Members of the Cabinet, Local bodies, Legislatures, Councils, Government Committees, those serving in the Army, Air Force, Navy and those working in ammunition factories not to be led away by emotion and abandon their posts. He advised them to stick to their various posts, and conserve their energies for the impending real fight for the national integrity and interests. He warned them that those very Congressmen would ultimately endanger the national integrity of India, and their Quit India movement would thus end in the vivisection of India.

After the outbreak of the August revolution, Savarkar's views were heard with more concern and interest throughout the country and in foreign lands as well. Although Savarkar was not in favour of the line of thought behind the Congress struggle, he was ever insistent on the demand for Indian freedom. He sent a cable to the British press warning the British public that the British bayonets might suppress the violent outburst of popular discontent; but "bayonets can never appease national discontent or remove its cause." He further stressed in his statement that India's willing co-operation could only be secured if the British Parliament made an immediate declaration to the effect that "(1) India is raised to the position of a free nation in the Indo-British Commonwealth having equal status with that of Britain herself, (2) during the war period this declaration should be immediately implemented by Indianization of the Central Executive Council whose decisions would be binding on the Viceroy with the only exception of matters military and strategical in connection with suppression of any internal anarchy and defending India against external invasion, (3) military forces should be fully Indianized as early as possible, (4) Provincial Governors should also have Executive Councils similar to the Central, and (5) after the end of the war, a conference should be immediately convened to frame a national constitution for India so as to give full effect to the declaration referred to above."

This appeal issued by Savarkar to the British public, writes

the London Correspondent of the *Bombay Chronicle* in his despatch of August 26, 1942, was "prominently featured by the leading newspapers like the *Times, Manchester Guardian, Daily Herald, News Chronicle*, and the *Yorkshire Post* without comment." The correspondent proceeds: "The appeal has been the topic of discussion among a section of the political leaders here and it is felt that an early initiative on the part of the British Government on the lines suggested by Mr. Savarkar is well worth making and with goodwill and co-operation on both sides, a satisfactory way out of the present Indian deadlock may yet be evolved." The correspondent concludes: "Mr. Savarkar's statement also came up for informal discussion among the Indian residents in London who gathered last night in a public meeting of the Indian League in the Central Hall."

But Mr. Winston Churchill, the greatest imperialist under the sun, was not there to liquidate the British Empire. On September 10, 1942, he assured the British Parliament in a statement on India that there was nothing serious about the Indian situation to cause them any worry and added that there were more British forces in India than there had ever been. Savarkar could not tolerate the British Premier's boast which he uttered in utter contempt for Indian national aspirations. So Savarkar reminded Mr. Churchill of the fate of Nebuchadnezzar, the mighty king of Babylon, who spoke in a similar boastful tone, while standing on the precipice of his mighty pride and power, and met his doom. Savarkar further remarked that the future of India did not lie in the lap of Mr. Churchill, but lay in the laps of war gods.

Though the British propaganda had duped Americans into believing the hoax to a very great extent, it became quite impossible for the British Government to misrepresent any longer the deteriorated Indian political situation and the deadlock in foreign countries. At this juncture the Muslim League resolved to send its deputation to foreign countries to propagate the ideal of Pakistan. Savarkar therefore resolved to counteract the Muslim League propaganda in foreign countries by sending a Hindu Mahasabha deputation to America and other countries to acquaint those countries with the political struggle and problem of India, and to foil the

false British propaganda and expose its hollowness which had misled the world opinion into believing that the Cripps Mission had failed not so much owing to unwillingness of the British to part with power as to internecine conflicts of the Indian people.

The idea of sending the deputation was subsequently dropped as neither the Muslim League members were, nor Rajaji was allowed to go abroad. However, the Hindu Mahasabha leaders decided to set up a committee of the Hindu Mahasabha to conduct negotiations with all important Indian political parties and personalities on the three outstanding national demands which the Hindu Mahasabha had framed. The Committee consisted of Savarkar, the President, Dr. Mookerjee, Dr. Moonje, Sri N. C. Chatterjee, Raja Maheshwar Dayal, Rai Bahadur Meherchand Khanna and Prof. V. G. Deshpande. The national demands were as follows: (1) the immediate recognition of India by the British Parliament as an independent nation, (2) national coalition government with full powers during the war period excepting the military portfolio, so far as the operative part was concerned, (3) the holding of a constitution-framing Assembly as soon as the war ceased. Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee was the prominent figure that moved with interest and vigour so much so that the committee evoked a great wave of enthuiasm all over India and representatives of the British, the American, the Chinese press and also of other countries took interest in the developments, and gave wide publicity in their home countries to the move and efforts of the Hindu Mahasabha.

The second All-India great organization, to quote Lord Devonshire, the then Under-Secretary of State for India, succeeded in securing an agreement on the national demands and a united appeal signed with unanimity by the foremost leaders of the Sikh brotherhood, the Presidents of the Momin and the Azad Muslim Conferences and other prominent Muslim organizations, the Presidents of the Christian Federation, the Nationalist League, the Liberal Federation and the ministers of Provincial Governments of Sind, Bengal and Orissa. The only party that did not sign the national demands was the intransigent Muslim League. Savarkar

knew the Muslim League's attitude, and had *strictly warned* Dr. Mookerjee not to interview Mr. Jinnah unless the League leader himself expressed his desire to meet him. Still in his personal capacity, Dr. Mookerjee saw Mr. Jinnah who surprised him by quoting offhand extracts from Savarkar's Presidential Addresses and twisting them to support his own demand for Pakistan.

Savarkar forwarded the Memorandum containing these united demands on the 9th of October 1942, to Mr. Churchill, the Premier of Great Britain, urging the British Government to transfer power in accordance with the united national demands put forward by the Hindus, the Muslims and the Christians ; the Congress demand being more or less on the same lines. Mr. Churchill acknowledged through the Viceroy the receipt of the appeal, and appreciated Savarkar's efforts in promoting unity among the several elements in Indian life, but observed that they had not so far resulted in any specific or constructive proposals enjoying the support of all the major parties. Savarkar then exposed the British Government by declaring that if the British Government could bestow the curse of slavery on India in spite of India's united will, why did the British now bestow the blessings of freedom in spite of her differences and dissensions ? He also asserted that the British Imperialism and not India's dissensions was the cause of India's misery !

The Hindu Mahasabha move for the united demand for independence flashed into the headlines. It had a very powerful effect on the public opinion in India and in foreign lands too. As a result of this, several press representatives and public men, who came to study the Indian situation in general from America, China and England, tried to know more closely the Hindu Mahasabha ideology and policy. Even American film-men got the Presidential office at Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, and its routine work screened and the news reels were exhibited in America.

But the most important outcome of the move for the united demand for independence was that it proved beyond cavil or criticism the falsity of the dishonest criticism of the opponents of the Hindu Mahasabha that being a communal organization, it could not give a lead to national policy. The Hindu

Mahasabha was in fact ever for a reasonable compromise. The Sind Hindu Sabha had honourably joined hands with the Muslim League in running a coalition Ministry. Dr. Mookerjee worked with Mr. Fazlul Huq successfully for a year or so in the Bengal Cabinet for the benefit of all communities; but he resigned the post when the Governor made it impossible for him to serve the people with self-respect. These steps sufficiently demonstrated that the Hindu Mahasabha endeavoured to capture the centres of power only in public interest and not for the loaves and fishes of office.

But when their monopolized reserves were utilized by the patriotic forces for the good of the people as best as they could, the Congress press, circles and leading groups shed crocodile tears and condemned Savarkar for being pro-Pakistani, and betraying Hindu interests as if they themselves had turned overnight Hindu-minded, caring for and guarding Hindu interests more watchfully than Savarkar did. Savarkar was amused with this accusation levelled by Congressmen and, saying that their anxiety for Hindu interest was quite laudable, he added: "The pity is that whether these very gentlemen would have any face to welcome their leaders when they would rush to the League-Headquarters after their release, to sign the pact for the vivisection of India, and sacrifice the Hindu interests with a vengeance on the altar of the Congress fetish of pseudo-nationalism." What a prophecy! There never was a prophet so unfailing and so unrelenting in his prophecies! For all these gentlemen and journals did verily support, some with brazen faces and some with sunken heads, the anti-Hindu policy of the Congress leaders after their release from jails.

CHAPTER XVII

The Writing on the Wall

In the meanwhile, attempts were made by leading pro-Pakistani Hindus, who were outside the jails, to capture the Hindu Mahasabha by *coup d'état* and make it accept the Pakistan scheme at least in principle so that the Hindu Mahasabha could be a handmaid to the Congress in supporting the latter's anti-national surrender to the Pakistani forces. Sri K. M. Munshi had even attended a meeting of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha and Rajaji had almost captivated Dr. Mookerjee and Raja Maheshwar Dayal. In order to ward off that danger, expose and frustrate the conspiracy, Savarkar resolved not only not to resign as already announced by him, but also to contest the election to the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha at the annual Session of the Mahasabha in 1942. This was the only time when Savarkar actually contested the election to the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha; and backed by the wisdom and overwhelming confidence of its electorates, Savarkar was almost unanimously elected to the Presidentship. The annual Session was held at Cawnpore in the last week of December 1942.

In the Presidential Address, Savarkar fully dealt with the pros and cons of the self-determination issue, and, refuting the arguments put forth in its support, resolved all doubts. He said he stood for provincial re-distribution, but not for provincial self-determination. The grant of self-determination, he stated, to provinces to secede from the Central State would blow up the Central State. Savarkar further observed that the proposed Pakistan State would be militarily dangerous and hence it would be suicidal to hand over the natural frontiers to a hostile group. He warned that economically and financially the Pakistan Muslims would not starve as the cold and calculating pro-Pakistani Hindus guessed, but they would pounce upon the neighbouring Hindu territories with fire and fanaticism. Did not the fate of Kashmir prove this truth ?

Some of the pro-Pakistani Hindus whispered to Savarkar that after the liquidation of the foreign power, Pakistan would be browbeaten into submission, and, therefore, as a stroke of statesmanship Pakistan should be granted. Savarkar replied that even without a State the Muslims had grown into such a threat; then with a State they would be better organized and prepared and the wishes of the pro-Pakistani Hindus would thus prove to be the beggars' horses! Therefore he asked the statesmen and politicians to draw a line and say 'thus far and no further' at that very stage. Some, he said, foolishly argued that the question of Pakistan was just like the Ulster phase in Ireland. Replying to this argument, Savarkar said that Ireland had never recognized the principle of provincial self-determination, and he declared: "Hindusthan shall and must remain an integral and powerful nation and a Central State from the Indus to the Seas. Any movement to undermine her integrity, cohesion and unity would be treated as treacherous and would be suppressed as any movement for Negrostan would be punished in the U.S.A."

An uncompromising and strongly worded resolution against the Pakistan scheme was passed at the Session. The frustration of the outsiders, who expected Mahasabha consent to Pakistan, at this was so great that the Hyde in Gandhiji bewailed through Rajaji: "Even those few leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha, who more or less sympathized with my formula regarding the Hindu-Muslim Unity, fell a prey to crowd psychology at Cawnpore." Mahasabhaites wondered who these leaders were who sympathized with Rajaji's Pakistani formula. But there was no answer. When asked by some bold Poona youths about it, Dr. Mookerjee said that Rajaji might have referred to Raja Maheshwar Dayal, and in his turn the Raja said that it might be Dr. Mookerjee! But Rajaji had referred to "leaders" and not to a single leader! Is the answer not clear? Thus did Savarkar prove to be the despair of the hybrid pro-Pakistani Hindus and a disappointment to statesmanly Hindu politicians, who were prepared to accept the principle of provincial self-determination.

Besides the Hindu Mahasabha Session, December 1942 witnessed two other important events. In his speech before the Federated Chambers of Commerce at Calcutta, Lord

Linlithgow stressed the need for maintaining the geographical unity of India. Sri Meherchanda Khanna represented the Hindu Mahasabha opposition to the vivisection of India at the Pan-Pacific Conference in America where he was sent as the Indian representative by the Government of India.

On February 1, 1943, Savarkar visited Shirdhon, the birthplace of the Indian rebel leader, Wasudeo Balwant Phadke, who rose in an armed revolt in 1879 in Maharashtra and who breathed his last in the jail at Aden longing for the rise of a great Indian Republic. It was an appealing, thrilling and romantic sight to see the world-famous revolutionary leader in Savarkar paying homage to his brilliant precursor.

Much water had flown under the bridges since then. The Congressites had travelled from a path of jail-seeking to a jail-breaking programme. The misplanned, ill-ordered August Revolution almost came to an end after a few weeks of violent disorders, mass lawlessness and mob violence. Sri Jai Prakash Narayan, its brilliant leader of action, admitted in his secret circular of January 1943, entitled "To ALL Fighters For Freedom" the failure of the Open Rebellion. Therein he ascribed the failure to the absence of efficient organization of the national revolutionary forces and the absence of further programme before the people. And when it was too late, Jai Prakash realized and remembered "there was our work *in the Indian Army and in the services* !"[1] After frustration there came the revelation and realization for which Savarkar had clamoured in 1942. Had the Congress leaders supported militarization and enlistment of patriotic youths in the forces ? Who was right, Savarkar or the Congress leaders ? Now realizing the magnitude of the fiasco and failure of his movement, Gandhiji began on February 10, 1943, his 21-day fast which was nothing less than a tactical move to force his release from the Aga Khan Palace.

The whole nation was rocked. In the Indian political sky huge cries of 'Release Congress leaders' arose. But the British Government remained adamant on the issue of Gandhiji's release. The Non-Party leaders assembled on February 19, 1943, to consider the situation which arose out

[1] Government of India Publication, *Congress Responsibility for the Disturbances*, 1942-43, p. 74.

of Gandhiji's fast at the Aga Khan Palace, Poona. Savarkar's attitude to Gandhiji, who differed from him in political matters, was charitable. He wired to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the President of the Non-Party Conference, on the 20th February "to issue a national appeal to Gandhiji himself to break his fast in the interest of the nation." In the statement issued on the same day Savarkar said: "We must all turn our faces from the alien and unsympathetic doors of the Viceregal Lodge to the bedside of Gandhiji, and entreat him to break his fast in the national interest to serve which he must have undertaken it. . . . No appeals, resignations or resolutions addressed to the Government can secure Gandhiji's release. . . . This national appeal should be communicated to him without the loss of a single minute through any one of them who are allowed to visit him. His life, Gandhiji himself may realize by such a national appeal, is not so much his own as it is a national asset, a national property."

At Delhi, the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha passed a resolution regarding Gandhiji's fast wishing prayerfully that Gandhiji's spiritual strength would enable him to survive the ordeal, but warned those concerned not to exploit the fast for political ends for bringing about constitutional changes and ending the deadlock without consulting the Hindu Mahasabha which would resist any encroachment upon Hindu rights or any scheme undermining India's integrity. Savarkar correctly sensed that if the fast was applied to resolving the political deadlock, it would result in a threat to the integrity of India. It was an historic reading of Gandhiji's mind. And a year later India was stunned when Rajaji came out with his formula and declared that Gandhiji had fathered it actually during this very fast at the Aga Khan Palace, a year before, and had authorized him to approach Mr. Jinnah for a compromise on that basis!

Now interested groups brought pressure on the members of the Executive Council of the Viceroy for tendering their resignations as a protest against the policy of Government in keeping Gandhiji in internment. Savarkar was of the opinion that the Members of the Executive Council should not resign on this issue. Dr. Ambedkar and Sir J. P. Srivastava withstood many hysterical appeals. But what about Aney and

others? Sri Aney, Sir Homi Modi, and Sri N. R. Sarkar, resigned, but one of them surprised all with his worldly wisdom full of carking anxieties for his political future! And yet he was the very politician who had in a responsive manner not hesitated at all to concur with his colleagues in their decision regarding the arrest of all the national leaders including Gandhiji, six months earlier. It is indeed an uncommon art to be able to butter both sides of one's bread! This partial evacuation of the Executive Council created a faint smile on the face of Gandhiji fasting in the Aga Khan Palace.

At this juncture the Muslim League was pushing the Pakistan proposal ahead. Its Sind League Ministry passed the Pakistan resolution inside the legislature. The Hindu Ministers of the Mahasabha persuasion opposed the resolution. It is worthy of note that Mr. Alla Bux, the nationalist Muslim leader, who was murdered a few days after this event for his —it was said—pro-Congress views, had no heart or guts even to attend the Sind Assembly Session and oppose the Pakistan resolution. Referring to this development, Savarkar warned the country against the impending peril in these memorable words: "Now the features of Pakistan delineated on the wall are so bold that even he who runs may read them. Only the blind and cowardly can still indulge in believing that the deadly serpent may yet prove to be a coil of rope."[1] Savarkar also pointed out the difference between those members who were of Mahasabha persuasion and those elected on the Congress tickets in regard to their political stand. The former opposed any anti-national scheme and proposals boldly and bravely, while the latter kept culpable silence at the time of solving any crucial and vital problem affecting the destiny of the nation such as the one mentioned above. But the short-sighted lead of the Congress, lacking as it was in historical perspective, failed to read the writing on the wall.

During the same month the Leaders' Conference was held in Bombay at the residence of Dr. Jayakar to explore the possibilities of Gandhiji's release. Prominent among those who attended the Conference were K. M. Munshi, Rajaji, Bhulabhai Desai, Alla Bux and Devidas Gandhi. It was through the personal pressure of Dr. Jayakar and Sir Tej

[1] Statement dated 10-3-1943.

Bahadur Sapru, who told Savarkar that something must be done to undo the injustice to the Hindu cause, that Savarkar attended the Conference on March 9, 1943. When Savarkar entered the residence of Dr. Jayakar, he saw leaders sitting in groups and talking among themselves. He found that there was no such question as Hindu interest or Hindu cause and the burden of the talks and discussion was the release of Gandhiji. When Jayakar and Sapru requested Savarkar to speak on the point of Gandhiji's release, Savarkar insisted that not only the release of Gandhiji, but also the release of all political leaders including Sri Sarat Bose should be demanded. He further said that the British Government should be urged either to release all those patriots or put them on trial.

Those were the days when the Liberals felt very uneasy to approach the Viceroy. So they earnestly requested Savarkar to approach the Viceroy with whom he really had great influence, and press for the release of Gandhiji. Next day, Savarkar could not attend the Conference owing to toothache and a previous engagement with Mr. William Phillips, President Roosevelt's personal envoy, then travelling in India. The interview covered a wide range of topics from the political situation in India to the future relations between India and the U.S.A. In the meanwhile, it was given out in the press that Savarkar had signed the appeal for Gandhiji's release which Savarkar contradicted to the leaders' great disappointment by a statement declaring that he was not present at the Conference on the 10th of March when the appeal was drafted and signed by its signatories.

Just then Mr. Jinnah, who was expecting a letter from Gandhiji in the Aga Khan Palace, thundered that terrible consequences would follow if the Government meddled with his post. Savarkar said that the threat of Mr. Jinnah was more amusing than alarming, and wondered why the League Fuehrer did not capture the Viceroy and proclaim Pakistan at once!

By now, the Hur rebellion was ruthlessly suppressed by the Government and its ring leader, Pir Pagaro, was hanged. The Muslim League demanded that his property should constitute a religious trust. Upon this Savarkar came out with a statement on May 4, appealing to the Government to compensate

the Hindus for the losses they had suffered, from the proceeds of Pir Pagaro's property, which had been extorted in the main from the Hindus whom the armed gangs of the Hurs had looted and harassed.

There was a change in the Executive Council of the Viceroy. The Viceroy appointed Dr. N. B. Khare Member of the Executive Council in place of Aney. Savarkar appreciated the nomination of Dr. Khare. Dr. Khare was a staunch supporter of the militarization policy, a fearless patriot and a politician of hard stuff, who cared more for his conscience than for his career and who never changed his opinion for securing a post or for future success. And Dr. Khare proved his worth when in the capacity of Commonwealth Relations Member he patriotically and with his characteristic fearlessness attacked the Segregation Bill proposed by the South African Government. The Segregation Bill had engaged the attention of the world and especially of the Indian leaders. Savarkar condemned it as an "anti-Indian, unjust and oppressive measure," and appealed to Britain and America "to protest against the most callous and insulting Bill, which cut at the very root of the high-sounding aims of Britain and America which stood for the vindication of freedom and equal treatment for the depressed nationalities of the world."

II

On the 28th of May 1943, Savarkar's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated all over India with great eclat and enthusiasm on a magnificent scale. Savarkar's birthday is an occasion for national celebration and jubilation every year to the Hindu Sanghatanists in Hindusthan. It was natural therefore that on his happy and romantic sixty-first birthday, which dawned after Savarkar had faced bullets, chains, cells, and years of internment, the Hindus should display their nation-wide rejoicings with special enthusiasm and added vigour. Opportunists, careerists and arm-chair politicians do reach in the natural course the day of their Diamond Jubilee; but it is a freak of fate, a fit of destiny, if a De Valera, a Mazzini, a Garibaldi or a Savarkar reaches the day of his Diamond Jubilee. India's greatest patriot of his generation, Savarkar

was to rot in a cell of the Andamans till his seventy-seventh birthday and was to be released at the end of the year 1961, if he survived!

Therefore on this unique day mass meetings were held in the capital cities of all provinces and were addressed by eminent and prominent personalities. Big functions were held in the District and Taluka towns; various public, social, literary and religious institutions passed resolutions in appreciation of Savarkar's great patriotic, literary and social services. He was also presented with purses and public addresses as a token of gratitude and in appreciation of his great services in the cause of Freedom.

On the evening of May 28, 1943, before a mammoth congregation at Poona, Savarkar was presented with a purse of rupees one lakh and twenty-thousand by the Savarkar Reception Committee, Poona, under the presidency of Sri N. C. Kelkar. Savarkar was touched with the boundless love his countrymen bore to him and the gratitude they showered on a nation-wide scale on the day. He said amidst pin-drop silence to the vast multitude: "I am really overwhelmed with the feelings of love and gratitude you have showered upon me which I cannot adequately express in words. Some sentiments are too delicate for words. It is a forgetful fit of destiny that I am amongst you today. Nobody could have predicted that I could survive the two transportations the severity of which on more than one occasion drove me to the thought of suicide! We lived in our veritable grave. Through fire and water we have stood by our noble resolve. And when I came out I was not my personal self. I was but a shriek of the distressed Hindutva." Next day, the Poona Municipality gave him an address of welcome. He told the meeting on the occasion that life for a century was no fascination for him. Striving terribly for the goal alone had given him the supreme joy of life. He wished that soldiers fighting for national independence should march over the bridges of the dead bodies of his colleagues and his own, and win the goal.

At Poona, on the same day, great ones of Marathi literature honoured Savarkar as a literary genius. The address solemnly stated: "It required Lord Krishna to say the *Gita* to inspire Arjun with the spirit of fighting. The Gita has been

since then the guiding pole-star and the beacon-light to the anxious world. Your place is among such authors of immortal fame. Unflagging is the pursuit of your ideal and conquering is your mission."

A similar function was held in his honour in Bombay at the Gowalia Tank Maidan on the 6th of June on a grand scale, under the presidentship of Sir R. P. Paranjpe, a former Principal of the Fergusson College from which Savarkar graduated. Speaking on the occasion, Paranjpe appreciated the great services of Savarkar to the country, marvelled at Savarkar's unabated persistence in the national struggle and at his mental and bodily vigour even after such a dreadful incarceration and a long internment. The eminent Liberal leader then asserted that Savarkar's militarization policy was dictated by sound political realism, and appreciated Savarkar's great work of Hindu consolidation and his valuable work for the uplift of the Depressed Classes. Paranjpe blamed Gandhiji for admixing religion with politics. He said that he could understand Savarkar's legitimate opposition to Gandhiji's policy of appeasement at all costs and reminded the country of the fate of Chamberlain at the hands of Hitler.

Mr. K. F. Nariman, Sri Jamnadas Mehta and Sri Chandragupta Vedalankar were the other principal speakers on the occasion. Then a purse and a silver replica of the s.s. MOREA, from which Savarkar had escaped at Marseilles, were presented to Savarkar on behalf of the public of Bombay. In reply to the great honour done to him, Savarkar reiterated his belief that nationalism itself was a step to a Human Government, that the Hindus were the national majority of Hindusthan, and that there should be an Indian State based on the principal of 'one man one vote' in Hindusthan.

On behalf of the people of Berar Savarkar's Diamond Jubilee was celebrated on August 1, 1943, at Amraoti with great eclat under the Presidentship of Sri Babarao Khaparde. Savarkar was presented with a purse. In reply to the great honour paid to him Savarkar explained how he was fulfilling the mission of Tilak. Nagpur, too, celebrated the Diamond Jubilee of Savarkar and presented a purse to Savarkar at a grand function. Dr. Varadarajalu Naidu was the main speaker on the occasion. Dr. Moonje presided over the

celebration. On this great occasion the Nagpur University conferred upon Savarkar a Doctorate of Letters in appreciation of Savarkar's great literary powers. What a contrast to the attitude of the Bombay University ! It not only failed to show any gratitude for or recognition of Savarkar's services to the nation and literature by conferring any special Degree on him, but also did not care to recognize and restore Savarkar's B.A. Degree so unjustly wrested from him when he was fighting for Indian Independence. Oh ingratitude! is thy name political animosity of men in power in India ?

A purse on behalf of the public of Ahmedabad was at a later stage presented to Savarkar at Ahmedabad on August 22, 1945. The purse had been subscribed on the occasion of Savarkar's Diamond Jubilee, but owing to the recurrent illness of Savarkar the celebration had to be postponed.

Excepting Tilak no other leader was similarly honoured in Maharashtra and the services of no Indian Leader except Gandhiji upto that day were publicly appreciated on such a nation-wide scale.

The main feature of the purses presented to Savarkar was an unequivocal declaration by the organizers, promoters and workers that they were offered unconditionally for his personal use as a token of nation's gratitude to Savarkar for his untold sacrifices, unparalleled sufferings and unequalled services to the country. Still some politicians like Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, who were not perturbed at the mismanagement of the Tilak Swaraj Fund, grew critical about the utility of Savarkar's purse. And all this when Congressmen as a group had boycotted the purse. If they were unconcerned with it, why could they not purse up their aspersions within their lips ?

In a special statement Savarkar acknowledged his debt to the gratitude shown by the whole nation for patriotic work, sufferings and sacrifice and said with a moving heart : " Still, even while I was moving on, loaded with garlands, through the pressing and cheering crowds on my 61st birthday, I continued to feel in a mood of aloofness that it was but a romantic accident on the path of life and I must be prepared to face a counter-transfer scene at any moment when all this

blossom, silver and gold might once again get transformed and hardened into iron and steel and fiery ordeal."

III

Savarkar's insistence on constitutional means inside and revolutionary methods outside the Indian nation, was revealed once more on July 27, 1943, when Mr. Jinnah was attacked by a Muslim youth with a knife. He had a narrow escape from the murderous attack. Though Jinnah belonged to the rival political party, Savarkar came out with a statement and condemned the act saying that "such internecine, unprovoked murderous assaults—even if the motive be political or fanatical—constituted a stain on the public and civic life and should be strongly condemned." Savarkar's candid regard for purity of civic life was appreciated by Mr. Jinnah himself, who wrote to Sri Bhide Guruji, Savarkar's Secretary, thanking Savarkar for his good wishes. That was the first and last occasion when a letter passed between these two great leaders.

The Mahasabha having now firmly held to its anti-Pakistan resolve, Savarkar resigned at the end of July 1943, the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha for the third time. This time, too, his resignation was not accepted, statesmen like Dr. Moonje being unwilling to change the horse in midstream.

But in spite of indifferent health, Savarkar's vigilant eyes were surveying the moves of the Pakistanis. A difficult situation was arising in Assam. Long before, Savarkar had warned the Assam Hindus of the impending danger. This time also Savarkar invited the attention of the Hindus to the imminent dangerous fate Assam would suffer at the hands of the homeless hungry hordes of Muslims from Bengal and Orissa immigrating into Assam with a veiled plan of undermining the overwhelming majority of the Hindus in Assam and turning it into a part of their proposed Pakistan. Hindu leaders in the Congress party could not gauge the danger. Though their leadership and nationalism depended for their life upon the strength of the Hindus, yet they pooh-poohed the calamity and ejaculated that it mattered not to them if there was a Muslim majority or a Hindu one in Assam. Savarkar

bewailed the lack of foresight on the part of the Congress leaders, who failed to see that "that very difference measures the distance between Akhand Hindusthan and Pakistan. It is the self-forgetting and suicidal mentality, which has smitten the Hindu race like a national curse and has been responsible in the main for the ills the Hindus are subjected to."

At this period an event of historical importance took place. In the month of June 1943, the League Ministry in Sind banned Chapter XIV of the *Satyartha Prakash*, the Bible of the Arya Samaj. None was affected more deeply than Savarkar and he came forward to defend the religious liberty of the Arya Samaj. In an appeal to the Viceroy he stated: "I emphatically draw your Excellency's attention to the contemplated action against the *Satyartha Prakash* by the Sind Ministry. That book is the scripture of the Arya Samajists and is revered by the Hindus in general. Every scripture including the *Bible* has something to say against other sects or religions. But no Hindu Ministry ever contemplated any action against non-Hindu scriptures." Savarkar was the only great leader who strongly and boldly protested against the unjust ban on the *Satyartha Prakash*. And that is why the Arya Samaj leader, Sri Ghanashyam Das Gupta, sought his guidance in the matter.

Neither the Congress press nor their leaders raised even their little finger against this, for they feared as usual that their Muslim brothers' sentiments would be hurt. It was a religious matter and that too concerning the Hindus! The Congress leaders were progressive men. And yet they were intelligent and progressive enough to struggle for restoring the Khilafat to Turkastan which she herself had banished! And this is not at all strange. Congressmen, who always walked on the tips of their toes to search for a Muslim grievance and to defend and appease it at the cost of Hindu interests and could later on move an adjournment motion in the Central Assembly over the execution of Pir Pagaro, did not feel an iota of sympathy with the Hindus for the unjust ban on their legitimate right of freedom of conscience. There was this method in their Muslim mania. They kept neutral over any problem affecting Hindu interests and their motto was either to keep mum over Muslim demands or to support them. And

for this lack of sympathy and support on the part of the Congressmen to the cause of the Arya Samaj, the Arya Samajists themselves were in no small measure responsible. A multitude of the followers of the Arya Samaj had changed their holy faith for Gandhism for all practical purposes and adopted Gandhiji as their godfather, who openly attributed narrow-mindedness to their prophet.

Then came the famine that smote Bengal, taking an unparalleled toll of human lives and reducing human beings and houses to dust. The Muslims tried to utilize the appalling situation for their worldly benefit. An organized Muslim campaign to convert hundreds of starving Hindu women and children to Islamic faith was reported to have been carried on during this man-made famine—a famine set in by a dark fanatic regime of the Muslim League Ministry. Savarkar attacked these nefarious active proselytizing designs of the Moslems. He shouted that the Muslims spent their funds on Muslim famine-stricken population alone. While as usual nationalist leaders like Devi Sarojini Naidu sent a cheque earmarked for the Muslim sufferers, the Hindu funds and trainloads of foodstuff were distributed amongst all the sufferers in a cosmopolitan way. Savarkar said that the Muslims were not only fed doubly, but they also used their surplus for dragging Hindu children and women into their fold. So Savarkar urged upon the Hindu leaders and organizations to help, rescue, feed, clothe and shelter Hindu sufferers alone, and warned them publicly: "Let the Hindus remember that suicide is no humanity. Humanity that allows itself to be abused to encourage inhuman activities, is no virtue but a crime." Some sordid journalists of false cosmopolitan view and hue honestly decried this realistic attitude of Savarkar; but slurred over the point whether the basis of Savarkar's advice was real or not.

About this time the official Vatican Organ, *Observators Romano*, had declared: "The Christian light shines already in the subcontinent of India. We hope one day it will blaze forth in full splendour." Savarkar was amused at this mistaken belief of the Pope and cabled a statement to the United Press of America, Washington, retorting squarely: "Surely the Vatican could not have chosen more absurdly

ridiculous a moment to wish India to blaze forth with Christianity than this one, when Hitler, Mussolini, Churchill Roosevelt and the other leaders of almost all Christian nations are vowing vengeance against each other and singing hallelujahs to Moloch in churches meant for Christ and when the Vatican, the capital of the High Priest of the Prince of Peace itself which was only yesterday honouring Mussolini, is today blazing forth in full splendour under the bombardment from air and praying through the mouth of cannon to save itself ! " Savarkar hit the nail on the head when he further said, " Physician heal thyself," and pointed out to the Pope that " his clock was behind time ; the Christian light had come to shine dimmer ever since the Shuddhi and Sanghatan movement had set in belying the hopes of Macaulay, who wished India to pulsate with Christianity, with the result that thousands of Hindus, who had embraced Christianity, were now repudiating it and re-embracing the Hindu fold and getting re-assimilated into the Hindu Nation not only religiously but also culturally, politically and socially." This view of Savarkar was highly appreciated by the Jews in India and particularly their spokesmen at Madras.

In November 1943, a memorable event in the social history of Maharashtra took place. It was the centenary celebration of the Marathi Stage. Savarkar was elected President and he presided over the functions at Sangli in the first week of November. It was a unique honour for a unique personality. The stage and screen luminaries, playwrights and *litterateurs* of Maharashtra did well in paying this unique honour to Savarkar, their foremost man of letters, poet and dramatist. Savarkar presided over several literary conferences and functions but none so memorable !

During the same week the second millenary of Vikramaditya the Great was celebrated at Sangli by the Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Sabha. Savarkar addressed a memorable mammoth public meeting on the bank of the river Krishna at Sangli and spoke on the great epoch-maker. He told the vast multitude that Vikramaditya the Great lived for two thousand years in the memory of his race, not because he was merely a great king in whose peaceful reign, life and literature, art and learning prospered, but because he defeated, demolished,

and drove out the Shaks and the Huns, the alien and non-Hindu invaders, and liberated the Bharat Varsha. The whole of Hindusthan felt enthused, inspired and animated, said Savarkar, at the mention of the name of Vikramaditya as the *Shakari* and *Hunari*, the conqueror of the Shaks and the Huns.

December came and Savarkar was again elected for the seventh successive time President of the *Hindu Mahasabha* Session to be held at Amritsar, despite his resignation pending before the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha and his repeated requests to the contrary. But owing to a severe attack of bronchitis he was confined to bed and Dr. Mookerjee officiated in his place.

The political deadlock was still unsolved. The British Government was busy with the operations of the war, and was not in a mood to discuss the deadlock. But efforts were made by some Liberal leaders in that direction. Sir Maharaj Kumar of Vijay Nagar expressed a desire to know the views of Savarkar on the All-Party Conference to be convened shortly thereafter to solve the deadlock. Savarkar replied to him that there was no harm in trying again. Sir Jagdish Prasad had an interview with Savarkar at Savarkar Sadan on February 24, 1944, and discussed current political problems. Early in the month, the Sub-Consul of the U.S.A. interviewed Savarkar to ascertain Savarkar's views on War and the Indian political situation.

In February 1944, Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi died a glorious death befitting an Aryan lady in the Aga Khan Palace at Poona. Savarkar's political differences with her husband were quite well known. Yet the personal loss of Gandhiji had his condolences and sympathies. In a telegraphic condolence message to Gandhiji, Savarkar said: "With a heavy heart I mourn the death of Kasturba. A faithful wife, and an affectionate mother, she died a noble death in the service of God and Man. Your grief is shared by a whole nation." Such noble feelings could come only from a heart devoid of any spite against Gandhiji as a private man.

But the disciples of Gandhiji afterwards dragged the deceased lady's name into an appeal for a fund in her name. It was not a fund which all partymen were to expend on a

national cause in its truest sense. Again the nationalism of its trustees was likely to be the same for which the Tilak Swaraj Fund was utilized. Savarkar could not tolerate this politics in the good name of Kasturba especially as it was feared that the Fund was likely to be used for anti-Hindu purposes. So Savarkar asked the Hindu Sanghatanist public not to contribute even a pie to the Kasturba Fund and to supply the sinews for the propagandistic struggle of the Congress to be used against the Hindu Mahasabha. He reminded the Hindu Sanghatanists how the Tilak Swaraj Fund was utilized to kill the spirit of the Tilakites, the policy of Tilak and his party, and to aid the Khilafatists.

As for the idea of a memorial to the good patriotic lady, he appreciated it, but asked Congressmen whether they had ever cared for the thousand and one widows of the revolutionary martyred heroes, who had pined away in miserable widowhood ! What Savarkar suggested to the people was that if at all they wanted to erect any memorial to Kasturba, they should also do so to the memory of the patriotic and pious souls like Madame Cama, Gopikabai Phadke, Satyabhamabai Tilak—who died while Tilak was at Mandalay—, Yashodabai Savarkar, ladies from the Parmananda family and numerous other ladies who were as patriotic as Kasturba. Savarkar also emphasized that the Kasturba Fund being a party Fund might be used by Gandhiji at his sweet will for the propaganda of his ideals which Savarkar believed to be detrimental to the ultimate interests and the integrity of Hindusthan. The good name of Kasturba which Savarkar honoured with due respect had nothing to do with the political propaganda of Gandhiji. The history of the Kasturba Fund afterwards was not in any way encouraging from the point of Hindu interests and the integrity of Hindusthan and Savarkar's stand proved to be quite correct. But the Congress press and some lackeys with malicious pens indulged in anti-Savarkar outbursts totally unjustified.

In March 1944, the Congressmen, who were freshly filtered out of the jails after the abrupt failure of their Quit India Movement, began to realize the frustration of their boycott of the Central Assembly. They now attended the Assembly and outvoted the Finance Bill in collaboration with the Muslim

League. Here was a combination of the August protagonists and their August antagonists. The Muslim Leaguers who were smarting under the Viceroy's stress in his announcement on the geographical, political, military and economic unity of India, seized the opportunity of browbeating the Viceroy and so they used the Congress Assembly members as a cat's paw to serve their ends by throwing the Bill out. Savarkar's unfailing insight saw the danger in this event. So he endorsed the view taken by the Mahasabha M.L.As in the Central Assembly led by Sri Jamnadas Mehta who did not support the League-Congress unholy alliance. The Congress party and papers severely criticised this non-co-operation on the part of the Assembly Members of the Hindu Mahasabha as a pro-British attitude. The stand taken by Savarkar in regard to this alliance was vindicated, as will be seen in the next chapter, with a vengeance by the disclosure of the Bhulabhai-Liaqat Ali Khan pact which was mooted by this alliance. The Congress party hailed the pyrrhic victory won by the alliance as a feather in their white caps. Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru characterised the white-feathered victory with his failing sight as the first rung of the ladder; but he must have soon discovered that the ladder was one that led to Pakistan.

Soon after this Gandhiji was released on May 6, 1944, because of his bad health. Speaking of this event, Savarkar said that this action on the part of the British Government was a humane one. He also wished Gandhiji speedy recovery and urged the Government to release Pandit Nehru and other leaders as well. What a patriotic sympathy for the compatriots! Had an iota of this sympathy been felt by Pandit Nehru and others for Savarkar, it would have added lustre to their patriotic selflessness. But they never did it nor did they show any inclination to do so even when Savarkar lay in the hospital or was bed-ridden, not to speak of Savarkar's arrest at Gaya in 1941 when Nehru and his Civil Liberties Union kept mum!

Shortly afterwards Savarkar had to issue a statement in reply to a speech made by Mr. Jinnah at Sialkot. In his speech at Sialkot, Jinnah referred to a statement of Savarkar and told the Muslims that Savarkar and Moonje had instructed the Punjab Hindus to join the Muslim League in

forming coalitions 'when it was inevitable to do so.' So Jinnah advised the Moslems to make it inevitable for the Hindus to co-operate with the League in forming the ministry. Upon this Savarkar replied that the report of his instructions as quoted by Mr. Jinnah was meagre and misleading; and if Mr. Jinnah construed it as an instrument to bend the Hindus to his will, then, he said, he should rest assured that the Hindus would never bend to the dictates of the League. Mr. Jinnah wanted in those days a Hindu leader to support his demands and his wish was father to the thought. What Savarkar in fact was driving at was that he was prepared to discuss any sensible, honourable and workable proposal for the Hindu-Muslim unity. One does not see in this any harm to national interests and one wonders why Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya should have twisted the statement of Savarkar in his propagandist history of the Indian National Congress! Savarkar had advised the Hindu leaders in the Muslim majority provinces to join ministries formed by the Muslim League without committing themselves to any scheme detrimental to the interests and to the integrity of Hindusthan. In criticizing this stand, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, in fact, blamed Savarkar for having tried to apply a check to the Leaguers who were running amuck in those provinces. Such a move could not but be a wrong strategy in the eyes of Gandhian politics in which Dr. Pattabhi had been steeped for two decades!

In the second week of June 1944, Sri M. N. Roy paid a visit to Savarkar Sadan with his wife, Mrs. Ellen Roy, as a courtesy call. Savarkar was then unwell. Yet the talk between the two leaders became very interesting when it touched the Muslim problem in its rational and realistic aspect. Two giants well known for their rationalism crossed swords with each other, and the great theorist in Roy had to face hard realities respecting the Muslim problem from all points. During this month the Government of India appointed Sir R. P. Paranjpe High Commissioner for Australia. He was the first Indian to be the High Commissioner for Australia. Savarkar expressed satisfaction at this appointment.

In the meanwhile a crisis was coming to a head in the Jaipur State. As foretold by Savarkar, Sir Mirza Ismail in

fact persisted in his pro-Muslim policy in Jaipur. He was stated to have stifled Hindi and the Nagari script, supported Urdu and demolished temples that came in the way of his town-planning, but left mosques *untouched. There was* a strong agitation in the State against his holding the office any longer. Pandit Ramchandra Sharma, a leader in that State, resorted to a fast in Delhi, protesting against the anti-Hindu rule of Sir Mirza Ismail. Savarkar upheld Pandit Sharma's demands and desired him to break his fast. After fifty-four days Sharma broke his fast with no small amount of success. For facts, figures and fairness had motivated his fast and they exposed the real state of affairs in Jaipur.

In the third week of June 1944, Savarkar had again an important interview with a personal representative of President Roosevelt, Mr. Lampton Berry. During the two-hour talk Mr. Lampton Berry discussed with Savarkar his views and policy towards the future Indo-American relations !

Towards the end of June the Bombay Government put a ban on the pilgrimage of the Hindus to Pandharpur and Savarkar successfully directed an agitation of the Hindu Sanghatanists for securing the religious freedom of the people.

CHAPTER XVIII

Fight for Akhand Hindusthan

I

Now we come to a very important chapter in the life of Savarkar. By now Rajaji, the whilom member of the All-India Congress Committee, released to the press his correspondence with Mr. Jinnah concerning his offer to the League leader which was fathered by Gandhiji during his fast at the Aga Khan Palace. Rajaji had now advanced to the far end of the proposed Pakistan scheme. Speaking on the birthday anniversary of the Prophet at Bangalore on April 12, 1943, Rajaji had said : " I stand for Pakistan because I do not want that State where we Hindus and Muslims are both not honoured. Let Muslims have Pakistan. If we agree then our country will be saved." [1] Mr. Jinnah in his press interview on July 30, 1944, referred to the correspondence with Rajaji and the proposal put forward by him and said : " As regards the merits of the proposal, Mr. Gandhi is offering a shadow, a husk, a maimed, mutilated and moth-eaten Pakistan and thus trying to pass off as having met our Pakistan scheme and Muslim demand." In one of his telegrams sent to Mr. Jinnah and now released to the press, Rajaji said : " Mr. Gandhi, though not vested with representative or special capacity in this matter, definitely approved of my proposals and authorized me to approach you on that basis. The weight of his opinion would most probably secure Congress acceptance." [2]

Mark the secret promise of the truth-seeker, Gandhiji, who abhorred secrecy in any matter. Read this further confession of Rajaji in his statement of July 16, 1944, issued from Panchgani in which he said : " It is now *two years* since I started work, even though I had secured Gandhiji's unqualified support to the scheme and it conceded all that the Muslim

[1] Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, *History of the Indian National Congress*, Vol. II, p. 507.
[2] *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated 31-7-1944.

League had ever demanded in its resolution of 1940." [1] Mark the words 'two years'. Was Savarkar's reading of the mind of Gandhiji and his satellites incorrect, his foresight blurring and the charges he levelled against them false ? Was Savarkar wrong in his devastating attack on Rajaji's role and Gandhiji's goal when they were actually hatching the secret move against the integrity of India ?

Rajaji's new offer contained the following terms : That the Muslim League should endorse the Indian demand for Indian Independence and co-operate with the Congress in the formation of a provisional Interim Government and conceded that if the Muslim majority provinces in the West and East decide by a plebiscite held on the basis of adult franchise in favour of a sovereign independent State separate from Hindusthan, the decision should be given effect to ; that in the event of separation a mutual agreement should be entered into for safeguarding defence, commerce and communications and that transfer of population should be voluntary. In the meanwhile Gandhiji wrote a letter to Jinnah asking him for an interview. Mr. Jinnah, who was well drilled, like the German war machines, in conducting political negotiations, replied on July 24, 1944, from Srinagar to Gandhiji's letter dated the 17th July from Panchgani that he would be glad to receive Gandhiji at his house in Bombay after his return. Mr. Jinnah saw his life's opportunity. When the scheme was out, there was a flutter for a while among the Congress circles and press ; but they were stunned to see that their holy father, Gandhiji, himself was acting as the Godfather to the unholy scheme of partitioning their Motherland and thereafter kept a guilty silence on the treacherous move.

The Liberal leaders, Sir Chimanlal Setalvad and Sir V. N. Chandavarkar, described Rajaji's offer as a danger to India's security !

Savarkar who believed that India was a united whole through ages and whose concept and worship of the Motherland were incomparable curtly stated : "It is really unjust to look upon Rajaji alone as the villain of this tragedy. His fault is that he allowed himself to play as a willing tool in the hands of Gandhiji." Savarkar flew into a rage at this beginning

[1] *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated 31-7-1944.

of the end of the United India. He added that "the Indian provinces were not the private properties of Gandhiji and Rajaji so that they could make a gift of them to anyone they liked."[1] Savarkar further declared that the Quit India Movement of the Congress did ultimately end in the Split India demand as foretold by him, issued an appeal to the Hindus in general and Hindu Sanghatanists in particular to denounce this nefarious proposal for Pakistan uncompromisingly and fundamentally, and asked the people to observe the first week of August 1944, as the Akhand Hindusthan and Anti-Pakistan week.

The tussle between the forces of Akhand Hindusthan led by Savarkar and the disruptive forces led by Jinnah and supported by Gandhiji and Rajaji aroused keen interest among political observers abroad. The American papers sought Savarkar's views regarding Gandhi-Rajaji proposal. So Savarkar cabled to the United Press of America, Washington, that the Hindu Mahasabha, the All-India representative body of the Hindus, condemned emphatically Gandhiji's proposal to vivisect India allowing the Muslims to form separate independent States, and added that the Hindu Mahasabhaites would never tolerate the breaking up of the unity of India, their Fatherland and Holyland.[2] The same message was cabled by Savarkar to Mr. L. S. Amery, the then Secretary of State for India. The political situation was worsening. Meetings supporting Rajaji's proposal at many places ended in pandemonium, huge demonstrations were held against his formula and dissatisfaction against it was expressed on a country-wide scale.

After a few days, as arranged between Gandhiji and Jinnah, the Pakistani special train guarded by the Khaksar Muslim Volunteers and protected by British soldiers who "happened" to travel in the same train, left Wardha for Bombay with Gandhiji inside. The nationalist opposition to him was demonstrated all the way. At several stations, black flag demonstrations were staged by Hindu Sanghatanists and other nationalists. And lo! On his arrival in Bombay, Gandhiji and his commercialised press appealed to the country to observe restraint and the people were asked to pray for the

[1] Statement dated 14-7-1944. [2] Cablegram dated 26-7-1944.

success of the very talks which were dangerous to the unity and integrity of India. Organs like the *Times of India*, Bombay, that change their minds with the change of their masters, went a long way in welcoming the readiness on Gandhiji's part to concede the principle of Pakistan as 'a constructive contribution towards the Congress-League settlement' though the proposal was an avowedly destructive contribution to the Indian nation and to the integrity of India.

Throughout this period Savarkar went on doing his duty of cautioning the nation against the tragedy. In a statement then issued he drew the attention of the people to the sins and grievous political errors Gandhiji and the Congress were committing, and referred rather indignantly amid a bitter atmosphere to the part Gandhiji was playing: "The monomaniacal fit can hardly go further; nor sin could be darker. But the darkest sin of vivisection of our Motherland and Holyland is still going to crown his political career, and all this in the name of non-violence, truth and God!"[1]

Even with the strong opposition the nation demonstrated to his formula, Rajaji was audacious enough to say that he found almost all important sections of the Indian people ready to support his Pakistani proposal except the Hindu Mahasabha which was determined to offer uncompromising opposition. He acknowledged publicly that the first spark of patriotism was lit in him in his youthful days by reading Savarkar's famous book, *The Indian War of Independence of 1857*. Rajaji further referred to Savarkar's attitude to his formula and said: "Mr. Savarkar has stated that it is the duty of every Hindu Sanghatanist to denounce the proposals. Mr. Savarkar may thus define the duty of the Hindu Sanghatanists, but what about the duty of the Indian Sanghatanists whose aim is to be free and not only to be organized against the Muslims?" In his scathing and telling retort, Savarkar said: "This was a case of Rajaji against Rajaji." He added that Rajaji would bear witness to the undeniable truth that he who ushered the word Independence in political currency for the first time in the recent history of India by proclaiming absolute political Independence of India, rose in revolt and invested the question of Indian Independence with international

[1] Statement dated 13-8-1944.

importance, must be knowing at least something of what that Independence, freedom, and Indian Sanghatan really implied ! " Savarkar proceeded in his master hit : " I do not know whether Rajaji's acquaintance with Sanskrit is on a par with that of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, the knight-errant, who is now out to prove that the Arabianized and Persianized Urdu Language and the Urdu script are better entitled to be the national Language and national script of the Hindus than Sanskritized Hindi. But Rajaji is after all born in an Acharya family ; it would not be far from truth if I presume that he must be knowing this much that the word Sanghatan means pre-eminently consolidation, integration, and unification and can never mean disintegration, dislocation, vivisection or decentralisation." He further asked Rajaji whether the latter who supported the principle of vivisection of India was an Indian Sanghatanist or those who opposed vivisection, and disintegration were Indian Sanghatanists ? Who could claim to be Indian Sanghatanists ? Those who led a butcher's knife at the neck of the Motherland or those who wanted to ward off the murderous attack ? Never did Rajaji dare look at Savarkar again through the press. So smashing was the hit—a Savarkarian stroke, telling and crushing !

The talks of Gandhiji with Jinnah in the palatial building of Jinnah at Mount Pleasant Road, Bombay, lasted for about three long weeks in September 1944. Jinnah was stubborn but shrewd, ruthless but realist in his own way in his demand for the vivisection of India. The underlining theme of Gandhiji's arguments was that the British Government should be ousted first and then the right of self-determination would be given to the Muslims. Jinnah insisted that the settlement between the Hindus and Muslims should be first made. Gandhiji clearly agreed to the principle of Partition as between brothers and promised that though he differed from Jinnah on the general basis, he would recommend to the Congress and the country the acceptance of the claim for separation as contained in the Muslim League resolution of Lahore of 1940. In a letter to Jinnah, Gandhiji said : " If the vote is in favour of separation, it shall be agreed that those areas shall form a separate State as soon as possible after India is free from foreign domination and can therefore be

constituted into two Sovereign Independent States." Lastly, Gandhiji said: "The League will however be free to remain out of any direct action to which the Congress may resort and in which the League may not be willing to participate."

Thus the Muslim participation in the freedom struggle was nowhere guaranteed; but the partition of India was guaranteed by Gandhiji to Jinnah! Gandhiji paid nineteen visits to Jinnah's house without receiving a single in return, even observed his 'Mondays' on Sundays to facilitate the progress of the talks and returned with an unpleasant face from Mount Pleasant. The master diplomat in Jinnah knew that now the British Government was required to sign his perfidious plot against the Indian integrity. Thus Gandhiji, who had regarded Pakistan as a sin, a patent untruth, a denial of God, and the undoing of the work of a good many ancestors agreed to lay the axe at the root of Hindusthan and to cut off the holiest part of India for the mere asking of the Muslims!

Savarkar's heart was torn with anxiety; his anguish was unimaginable. A true son of India, he was grappling to save the neck of his Motherland from the knife of the butchers, fighting against the colossal betrayal by great leaders, against the long purses of the multi-millionaires who sided with those leaders and the great guilty press that saw the treachery being enacted, but shed no tears, not to speak of offering any opposition to it. Savarkar shouted: "Hark countrymen, the Indian National Congress, which was ushered into existence to consolidate the Indian Nation, has itself betrayed its sole mission, the very justification of its existence and falling a victim to the pseudo-nationalistic malady, has dealt the unkindest cut of all at the Indian national integrity." The keeper turned verily a poacher! As balanced a statesman as Sri Srinivas Sastri said that it was impossible for a genuine nationalist to remain tongue-tied while the integrity of our Motherland was being bartered!

To all sensible politicians and the national-minded people in general who publicly protested against the Pakistani proposal, Savarkar fervently appealed in a statement to organize a whirlwind protest against the sinful Congress designs to break up the integrity of Hindusthan, and not to remain tongue-tied without raising a single word of protest against the political

matricide of their Motherland. As a counter-move to the Gandhi-Rajaji formula Savarkar contemplated to hold an Akhand Hindusthan Leaders' Conference on the 7th and 8th of October 1944. He invited all those leaders to the Conference who had taken up a definite attitude to oppose any efforts aimed at breaking up the integrity of Hindusthan as a Nation and a State on any grounds whatsoever, whether religious, cultural, linguistic or economic.

The Akhand Hindusthan Leaders' Conference was held accordingly on the 7th and 8th of October 1944, at New Delhi as scheduled. More than three hundred leaders including Master Tara Singh from the Punjab attended the Conference. His Holiness Sri Shankaracharya of Puri was also present and blessed the Conference in a dignified Sanskrit speech. The Hon. Sir Jogendra Singh, Member for Education, the Hon. Dr. N. B. Khare, Commonwealth Relations Member of the Government of India, were also present. Inaugurating the Conference, Sri Jamnadas Mehta, denounced the concept of Pakistan and asserted in his brilliant style: "As a Hindu, I reject it; as an Indian, I repudiate it, and as an internationalist, I repel it." Mehta further called for an unrelenting war on the enemies of Hindusthan which he said, were the British imperialism, Muslim fanaticism, Congress wobblings and our own apathy. In his brief brilliant speech, Savarkar explained the object of the Conference and dwelt on its representative character. He hoped that there would be no difference of opinion on the main resolution.

Dr. Radha Kumud Mookerji, a renowned authority on Indian History and Politics, presided over the Conference, and in his Presidential Address said: "A crisis of the first magnitude has been created in our national history by some great leaders who have convinced themselves that it is impossible for our Mother Country to attain her independence and the status which is her birth-right except on the basis of Hindu-Muslim Unity." [1] He lamented the misreading of the national history and politics on their part and asserted that the Homeland of the Hindus through millenniums of their history had been nothing short of the whole of India. The man of vast erudition further said that Pakistan was a totally

[1] *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated 9-10-1944.

unacceptable scheme as a solution of the communal problem, as it sought to solve it at the cost of the unity of the Mother Country.

Master Tara Singh declared at the Conference that the Sikhs were the gatekeepers of India. He said that he had not come to lend support, but to seek support for the Sikh determination to guard the Frontiers of Akhand Hindusthan, and sounded a warning that even if the majority of the Hindus agreed to Pakistan, they had no right to force it upon the Sikhs. Several other leaders from Bengal, Assam, Madras, Jaipur, Meerut, Barreilly and Poona supported the main resolution which unambiguously declared its unflinching faith in the oneness and integrity of India and its firm conviction that the partition of India would be fatal to the best interests of the country as a whole and to every community.

Among the three hundred sympathetic messages received, those from Sri Srinivas Sastri, Sir R. P. Paranjpe and Sri Ramrao Deshmukh exhorted the Hindus to value the interests of the country more than those of a passing political party and wished success for the Conference.

The Conference ended in a great enthusiasm and a determination of the nationalists to oppose Pakistan. This was the greatest demonstration of the nationalist opposition to the scheme of Pakistan during this period.

In August 1944, Dr. Mookerjee visited Poona. Savarkar appreciated his "recent condemnation of Provincial self-determination" and desired in a telegraphic message to L. B. Bhopatkar that the crown of thorns of the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha should be bestowed upon Dr. Mookerjee next year. In the second week of November 1944, Savarkar once again announced his irrevocable decision not to accept the Presidentship of the Hindu Mahasabha any more. Dr. Moonje, who could read the times with a clear foresight, appealed personally to Savarkar in all sincerity to reconsider his decision as he thought that there was no other force but Savarkar that could avert the coming disaster! But Savarkar's deteriorating health was now unequal to the strain and task and he told Dr. Moonje that his decision was irrevocable.

In the second week of November 1944, Savarkar appealed to the Viceroy and to the Governor of Sind to lift the ban on the *Satyartha Prakash* and added that the proscription of the *Satyartha Prakash* was bound to result in a similar demand for the ban on the *Koran* all over India. In this connection he also saw the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, on November 27, 1944. But the Congress remained still unconcerned in spite of the suppression of the right of freedom of worship of the Arya Samajists. Not only that, but the Congressmen remained neutral when Bhai Parmananda moved an adjournment motion over the *Satyartha Prakash* ban in the Central Assembly and the motion failed for want of support!

Towards the end of the year the Hindu Mahasabha held its annual Session at Bilaspur. Savarkar inaugurated this session over which Dr. Shyama Prasad Mookerjee presided. In his brilliant and succinct address Dr. Mookerjee put before the people Savarkarism in a modified form although couched in the style of a brilliant university professor! The main features of the Session were the elucidation of the economic policy of the Hindu Mahasabha and the adoption of a draft of the Future Constitution of India prepared by the Gokhale Committee and which was moved by Sri L. B. Bhopatkar.

At Bilaspur Savarkar also presided over the Satyartha Prakash Conference at the time of the Mahasabha Session and expressed his righteous indignation by declaring that had there been Hindu Sanghatanist ministries in all other provinces, the *Koran* would have been instantly banned till the *Satyartha Prakash* was fully restored in Sind.

II

The year 1945 was a turning point in Savarkar's life in many respects. Owing to a serious breakdown in his health, his constitution that stood the hardships of the Deathland, the strain of the social work in Ratnagiri and since 1937 the whirlwind propaganda from one end of Hindusthan to the other, was now refusing to stand the strain of active political life any more.

In the month of March 1945, Savarkar suffered a great

bereavement. His elder brother Ganeshpant *alias* Babarao Savarkar passed away at Sangli after a prolonged and painful illness. Savarkar's lifelong trusted elderly counsel, compatriot and heroic brother thus passed away. No brothers in modern politics stood by their brother through thick and thin as did Babarao Savarkar and Dr. N. D. Savarkar loyally stand through fire and water by their beloved brother, Tatya. India's pioneer devotee of revolution, Babarao Savarkar was a patriot of heroic enduring, endless sacrifice and silent selfless service. The younger brother, Dr. Narayanrao Savarkar, attended the sickbed of Babarao at Sangli. Savarkar had seen the ailing brother a few days before the latter's death. His distant stay made him write in his anxious moments letters to his brother who was on his death-bed. Savarkar wrote to his dying brother : " Our life work (i.e. the work of the three brothers) was one. In our generation we have tried to repay our spiritual debt to our forefathers. No historian of modern Hindusthan will fail to write in golden letters one separate chapter. Our political opponents have familiarized the title of that chapter as the Savarkar Epoch. By giving the countrymen two battle cries, " Victory to the Goddess of Liberty " and " Hindusthan belongs to the Hindus," we have thus been instrumental twice in bringing about a fundamental revolution in the nation's ideology and active political life."

" The Lord of Death, who is now standing by your side, is meeting you, not like a foe, but like a friend. You have lived up to your life's ideal. Never did even once you dream of abandoning the torch of freedom which in your boyhood you vowed to hold aloft. Great were your sufferings. Equally great have been your joys. You have bravely suffered the hardships of a political prisoner condemned to a life sentence in the Andamans. In sufferings as in happiness, never did you drop down the banner of Revolution."

The heroic fighter died thinking only of his country's welfare. An anxious enquiry on his lips an hour or two before his last breath was about the Communist threat to Nepal ! For, Nepal was his beloved Hindu Kingdom from his boyhood. Gandhi wrote a letter offering his condolences to Savarkar addressed to his Ratnagiri residence which Savarkar had left eight years ago. Gandhiji could send immediate

condolence by a telegram to His Exalted Highness the Nizam of Hyderabad on his mother's death, but he wrote a letter to Savarkar and that too to a wrong address. Can this wrong address on the letter be a mere slip of memory committed by the unfailing mind of Gandhiji ? Leaders, statesmen and newspapers from America, England, France, Germany and Japan knew that the residence of Savarkar was at Bombay. Be that as it may, Savarkar, however, thanked *Shriman* Gandhiji sincerely in fluent Hindi, ending his letter with an inquiry about the health of Gandhiji. What a geniality of a wronged soul !

The first quarter of the year 1945 witnessed a historic event. It was at this juncture that the late Bhulabhai Desai, the leader of the Congress party in the Central Assembly, who had seen the Viceroy, Gandhiji and Liaqat Ali during the early part of the year, made a secret pact with Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, the Secretary of the League Party in the Central Assembly, with the secret consent of the truth-seeker, Gandhiji, who had always declared that there was no place for secrecy with him. This treacherous pact surpassed the Rajaji formula. It agreed to a percentage of fifty-fifty in all representations for the Hindus and the Muslims. The parity of the alliance of the Congress with the League in the Central Assembly now ripened into a reality. Shortly after this Lord Wavell, the Viceroy, flew to London on March 21, 1945, with these proposals for the formation of an Interim Government at the Centre. This was a further loss of Hindu rights. This pact was also supported by the Sapru Committee's findings which were cabled to Lord Wavell in London simultaneously. There was a race, as it were, of betraying Hindu interests amongst all the Hindu leaders except the Mahasabha leaders ! Though the Sapru Committee stood for a Union of India as also for adult franchise and joint electorates, it conceded parity of representation in the Central Assembly and the Union Executive between Muslims and Hindus other than the Scheduled Castes. The Muslims pocketed the proposals of parity. The British Government as usual accepted the parity, the worst part of the proposals, and threw away the proviso for joint electorates ! The Hindu Mahasabha never hoped for any honourable settlement to come out of it. Dr. Moonje

warned the Hindus not to expect too much of Wavell's visit to London.

Though Savarkar was keeping indifferent health and was hardly out of his bereavement, he had to direct some important features of policy regarding the Hindu States. So in response to the fervent appeals from the States' Hindu leaders like Sri Anand Priya of Baroda, he presided over the All-India Hindu States Conference at Baroda in April 1945. Then in the month of May, Savarkar's only daughter Miss Prabhat was married at Poona to Sri Madhavrao Chiplunkar, the grandson of the brother of Sri Vishnushastri Chiplunkar, the brilliant colleague of Tilak and eminent essayist of Maharashtra. During his stay at Poona Savarkar addressed the Hindu Rashtra Dal,—now outlawed—then a new semi-volunteer organization aiming at the spread and propagation of unalloyed Savarkarism for the consolidation and all-out social and political revolution in conformity with its ideal, which could not be principally preached in any other organization.

After a stay of nine weeks in London, Lord Wavell returned to India in the first week of June with the so-called Wavell Plan. At one stroke the three-year old deadlock was sought to be broken by the Viceroy through an announcement. In his broadcast His Excellency, the Viceroy, said he proposed, with the full support of His Majesty's Government, to invite Indian leaders to take counsel with him with a view to the formation of a new Executive Council, more representative of organized political opinion. The proposed new Plan, he declared, would represent the main communities and would include an equal proportion of caste-Hindus and Muslims. There was no reference to the Indian States in the Plan, not to speak of Indian Independence. The Plan, however, presupposed full co-operation in the war against Japan by the leaders. Consequently, the erstwhile "Quit India heroes" were released to take part in the Simla Conference without even a shadow of success in their struggle. The Congress leaders were ready now to fight for British imperialism against the Japanese aggression and even against Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose and his Indian National Army as openly declared by Pandit Nehru.

With the blessings of the Mahatma and the betrayal of the nation sponsored by the Congress, Lord Wavell thus killed the last hope of democracy in India with his nefarious Plan. The Muslims who formed only 22 per cent of the total Indian population were given parity in representation with the caste-Hindus consisting of 54 per cent of the total Indian population. Hindus who formed nearly 75 per cent of the total Indian population were thereby divided between the caste-Hindus and the Scheduled Classes. The Congress represented the caste-Hindus through its Muslim President, Maulana Azad. The Muslims were represented through the League President, Mr. Jinnah, the parties in the Central Assembly were represented through the leaders of their parties in the Central Assembly, and the Premiers of the Provinces were also invited to attend the Conference. The Sikhs and the Scheduled Classes were represented by their own leaders. The Hindu Mahasabha was the only political party that was deliberately ignored and dropped out of the Simla Conference. Even the mildest possible leader from the Hindu Mahasabha would not have stooped to agree to the anti-democratic, anti-progressive and unjust proposal of parity between the caste-Hindus and the Muslims.

The Conference met at Simla on June 28, 1945. Within the first few hours the Simla Conference agreed to the basic aspect of the Wavell Plan, namely the prosecution of war against Japan. But weeks of open and private negotiations thereafter failed to produce an agreement on the personnel of the Central Government Executive and the Simla Conference ended on the 14th July 1945, keeping on record the acceptance of the parity between the caste-Hindus and the Muslims. Thus the Wavell Plan failed according to plan, but assuring a further gain to the Muslims !

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha met in the meantime on the 24th and 25th of June at Poona. At a mammoth meeting attended by over seventy-five thousand people on the grounds of the S. P. College, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee under the presidentship of Savarkar made a very stirring speech condemning the Wavell Plan. A protest week was observed from July 1 to July 7, 1945, at the behest of the Hindu Mahasabha all over India. Accordingly thousands of

meetings all over India simultaneously condemned the Wavell Plan as anti-Hindu, anti-national and anti-democratic! At a Bombay meeting during the protest week Dr. Mookerjee, the President of the Hindu Mahasabha, described the Simla Conference as a combination of conspirators comprising British imperialists, Muslim Leaguers and the Congress leaders.

There was a sense of embarrassment and shame in the general feeling and tone of the public for their nationalist leaders who had stooped so low. Some of the Congress leaders were ashamed in their heart of hearts for having supported the anti-national Wavell Plan. They had lost their face. Their Premiers, Pandit Govind Vallabh Pant and Sri B. G. Kher, were seized for a time with a feeling of perturbation at the permanent reduction of the Hindu majority to a minority and at the elevation of the Muslim minority to the majority. But their repentant awakening proved to be abortive and momentary. Perhaps their Mahratta blood must have boiled at the crushing humiliation meted out to the national majority of Hindusthan.

Savarkar called the parity between Hindus and Muslims as a negation of nationalism, and said that to honest thinking men, it was the pyre of Indian nationalism! Where was the man of forward march and progress, Pandit Nehru? This defender of democracy, the dreamer of the shape of things to come, Pandit Nehru, was all the while a party to this anti-national Wavell Plan. After some time the Congress leaders and papers, who always held the prestige of their High Command to be more precious than the interests of the nation in general, were callous enough to say that the Wavell Plan was an interim arrangement and so it could be tolerated. This face-saving argument of the leaders of the Congress evoked a crushing retort from Dr. Mookerjee who asked the Congress leaders: "Can you ever commit an interim suicide? If not, then suicide once committed can never be undone!"

The country-wide protests against the parity proposals envisaged by the Wavell Plan were growing daily. The Hindu Mahasabha intended to launch direct action against the Wavell Plan. As a first step, eminent Mahasabha leaders like Sir Gokulchand Narang, Raja Maheswar Dayal and Rai

Bahadur Harischandra renounced their titles. But unfortunately the Mahasabha President, Dr. S. P. Mookerjee, utterly failed to turn the boiling opposition to good account and to launch any direct action in defence of democracy and the rights of the national majority—the direct action which he once so much clamoured for inopportunely. Had the Hindu Mahasabha done this, it would have risen in the eyes of the public. It was here that the rudder of the ship of the Hindu Mahasabha broke down and the rudderless ship was swept down along with the inexperienced and vacillating captain into the trough of the popular estimation in the election held soon thereafter.

But the fact that the Hindu Mahasabha was the only political organization that stood stubbornly against the anti-national Wavell Plan will be recorded by history. Times needed a stronger action and efforts than they put in. Their protests were not powerful enough to bring down the prestige of the leaders of the Congress which had stooped to the anti-national, anti-democratic and anti-Hindu parity proposals as conceived by the Wavell Plan. Mere condemnation could not crush out the Congress misdeeds at the Simla Conference. It was thus that what Savarkar had won at Bhaganagar and Bhagalpur, Mookerjee lost at Simla. The Mahasabha really missed the bus!

After the failure of the Simla Conference, there were bickerings among Congressmen for a while. It was rumoured that Sardar Patel and Pandit Nehru were impatient of the moves taken by Rajaji and Bhulabhai Desai behind their back which had led to the proposals of the Wavell Plan. Sardar Patel was so indignant that at a meeting on the 9th August in Bombay he thundered: "If such diplomatic efforts are repeated, take it from me that I would be out of the Congress." But the outcry and indignation was not the white heat, but a white-wash to save the party from an internal breakdown.

Savarkar was feeling the strain of the continuous whirlwind propaganda heavily. His health was fast deteriorating. With great efforts he could attend to important correspondence and allowed only important interviews in spite of medical advice. One of the most important interviews that took place in August 1945 was with the representative of Allama Mishraki,

the Chief of the Khaksars, regarding some scheme the Khaksars had issued for discussion.

At this time there was a move by some scheming brains in the Mahasabha to throw open the Hindu Mahasabha to the non-Hindus. Savarkar advised the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha that they should keep the Hindu Mahasabha intact inasmuch as every political question in India was religious and every religious question was political. He further strongly affirmed that the Hindu Mahasabha must continue its mission even after Hindusthan was politically free.

III

During the pendency of the Simla Conference Britain went to the polls and there was a landslide against the Conservative party and the Labour party was returned to office on July 10, 1945, with an overwhelming majority in Britain. Almost simultaneously Japan surrendered to the Allies in the East. World events moved with an electric rapidity. The Viceroy of India made a second trip to London in the latter half of August 1945, and returned to India after the middle of September 1945, to announce general elections to test the strength of the political parties, to break the ground for future political negotiations with the newly elected representatives, to hammer out a constitution and to negotiate a treaty with the Constituent Body.

Now all the issues, implications and intentions were to be clarified. Who represented the Muslims and who represented the Hindus? The Congress with its gigantic political machinery plunged into the election campaign heart and soul. Supported by the 'Pakistan' purse, the Muslim League also entered the election arena with 'Pakistan or Perish' as its slogan. The Congress manifesto stressed the Quit India demand and the Congress leaders and the press swore by an undivided India. The Hindu Mahasabha with its meagre purse and scanty press entered the field with the slogans 'Independence and Integrity of India,' 'By our way lies, O Hindus, your salvation, Congress way lies your destruction and ruin.' The Mahasabha leaders announced with justifica-

tion that 'a vote for the Congress was a vote for Pakistan!' Besides scanty press and a scanty purse, there was one more disadvantage from which the Hindu Mahasabha suffered. Throughout the election period the Hindu Mahasabha lacked the iron and dynamic leadership of Savarkar, for he was bed-ridden and made no move. As regards the Congress, it was the greatest political party in India, and had ruled over seven Provinces and had many opportunities to influence people as rulers. Besides, it had at its disposal a big press, big purses and big political wholetime machinery employed for the election campaign.

And on top of it all came the somersaults of the Congress leaders that allured the people. Sardar Patel inspired confidence in the Hindu electorates by his anti-Pakistan outbursts and anti-League speeches. Congress was rapidly gaining confidence and the Hindu Mahasabha was swiftly losing its position. In the last week of September 1945, at a meeting of the All-India Congress Committee in Bombay, Sardar Patel even demonstratively chastised a Muslim member, one Mr. Mians, in these words: "If you say that the Muslim League is a nationalist organization, why are you to be found in the Congress at all? Ever since the Congress abandoned unadulterated nationalism the mischief has grown. That was when the Congress accepted the separate communal electorates. There have since then been a series of mistakes. From minority representation we travelled to the fifty-fifty parity principle. Now it would never be repeated. Congress will never go to the Muslim League." What a confession vindicating Savarkar's charges against the Congress!

Pandit R. S. Shukla, Prime Minister of C.P. and Berar declared that if Pakistan was established, Muslims in Hindusthan would be treated as foreigners! In Calcutta, at Deshbandhu Park Pandit Nehru thundered that there could be no truce with the Muslim League which had always opposed the Congress struggle. The Muslim League propaganda railed and rained. Mr. Liaqat Ali, the League Secretary, said at Delhi, "The Muslim is a born fighter. He may hesitate to cast a vote for Pakistan, but he would not hesitate to shed his blood." Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, another League Leader, now notorious for his outrageous unconcern

at the Hindu deaths in the Calcutta killing, challenged Pandit Nehru to win a single Muslim seat in the Central or Provincial Assembly. And his challenge was unfailing, for not a single Muslim seat was won in the election by the Congress from the Muslim electorates. In this state, Savarkar persistently sighed from his sick-bed for Hindu wisdom. Ailing Savarkar said in a frantic and forlorn appeal to the Hindus that disaster would overtake India if Congressmen were elected to the Legislatures on mere promises. But the Congress had hypnotized the Hindu masses with the stolen thunders and the borrowed Mahasabha slogans, and seemed to win.

The most unfortunate aspect of the election affair for the Hindu Mahasabha was that its President, Dr. Mookerjee, lost his grit and confidence in the nick of time. There was a sudden breakdown in his health. Pandit Nehru and Sardar Patel who never showed courtesy of inquiring after Savarkar's health even during his serious illness, prepared the ground for further events when they all ran to Dr. Mookerjee to enquire after his health. The sudden rush and gush of their anxiety and interest in the health of Dr. Mookerjee was a pointer. He gave up the struggle even before he joined the battle! What would be the fate of the organization led by a leader without unbending will and invincible faith? That is what exactly happened in the case of the Hindu Mahasabha's political life.

In the meanwhile, the question of the I.N.A. men's trial came to the forefront. In the first week of December 1945, Savarkar urged Mr. Attlee, the Prime Minister of Great Britain, to release all the I.N.A. soldiers without any humiliating conditions as an act of grace by declaring a general amnesty in view of the general convention of international treatment dealt out to war prisoners and in view of the very deep discontent aroused in the public mind. The Hindu Mahasabha had also observed an I.N.A. day, but the Congressmen who had styled the I.N.A. as "rice soldiers" earlier now took their very side, stole a march over the Hindu Mahasabha, and fully utilized the political sympathy and energy emanating from the I.N.A. trials for their own party ends. Savarkar was bed-ridden; Bhopatkar and Moonje moved in the affair, but without response.

The interest taken by top-ranking leaders of the Congress in the I.N.A. trials may have been with an eye to the elections, as was evinced from the very ungenerous attitude they adopted towards the I.N.A. men after they were firmly installed into power. Similarly, the unflinching oaths taken by the Congress leaders to stand by united India were shamelessly betrayed afterwards and the Hindu Mahasabha slogans openly adopted as their own by Congress leaders like Sardar Patel, proved veritable bombshells on the popular support to the Mahasabha candidates, and the sentinels and defenders of Akhand Hindusthan were routed in their last ditch. But let it be recorded here that their heroic failure was more glorious than the pyrrhic success of the Congress candidates. The Hindu Mahasabha candidates, like Bhopatkar and Bhai Parmananda stood unflinchingly at the risk of their lives with an iron will as the sign-posts warning the Hindus : "Our way lies your salvation ; Congress way lies your ruin ! "

The Hindu Mahasabha was in the end completely wiped out of the political picture of India, so far as the election results were concerned. And what about the Congress ? Oh ! it also met its Waterloo in the fields held by Muslim electorates. History repeats. The Rajputs fought Maha Rana Pratap for the Moguls, and they also fought the Mahrattas for the Moguls. Here the Congress fought the Hindu candidates with terrific ruthlessness and routed them.

But by securing all the thirty-two Muslim seats in the Central Assembly, the Muslim League routed all the Congress Muslim candidates so completely that had not Mr. Asaf Ali been elected by a joint electorate at Delhi, there would have been no Muslim left even for adoption purposes for the self-styled Indian National Congress which boasted of representing the Muslims also. The victory of the Pakistani forces was so complete and great that Mr. Jinnah declared in Delhi that his victory was the victory of a nation and the Leaguers achieved what Hitler could not. With the Congressmen playing the role of Chamberlain, his boast held much water.

One more point deserves attention. The Hindu Mahasabha was the only Hindu Organization that stood by its pledges to the Hindu Nation through fire and water. What were the Arya Samajists and the R.S.S. men doing ? Let it be said to

the credit of the small per cent of those defenders of the Hindu Nation from these two organizations that they did help the Hindu candidates far-sightedly enough, but let it also be recorded that a good many persons from these two great institutions of Hindu hope and faith kept culpable neutrality over such a life and death struggle in which the Hindu Nation was involved, while the majority of them were reported to have voted for the Congress.

This colossal rout accelerated the deterioration in the health of Savarkar so much so that in a telegram sent to Sri N. C. Chatterji he bewailed. " My nerve system has been literally shattered for the last two years. It has now collapsed." Savarkar now realized from his sick bed the implications of the success of the Congress in the elections at the hands of the Hindu electorates. He realized that the battle for Akhand Hindusthan was almost lost. So great was the nervous exhaustion that followed from this that at times in his bed he showed signs of blurred memory and soon on expert medical advice, he was removed on January 1, 1946, to Walchandnagar near Poona where the undivided devotion to the Hindu cause in Seth Gulabchand and his reverential affection for his leader looked after Savarkar's health with great care and anxiety.

CHAPTER XIX

From Parity to Pakistan

I

The year 1946 opened with general elections to the Provincial Legislatures all over India. Congressmen used the same old tactics and reiterated the pledge of a United India. On January 14, 1946, Sardar Patel thundered at Ahmedabad : " Granting of Pakistan is not in the hands of the British Government. If Pakistan is to be achieved, Hindus and Muslims will have to fight. There will be a civil war. The Congress is no longer going to knock at the doors of the League. The Congress has tried to settle with the League many times. But it has been kicked every time." Such masterpieces of the Sardar, the steam-roller of the power and prestige of the party that had ruled, and the press, purse and propaganda let loose by the greatest political organization in India, overran the Hindu Mahasabha candidates in elections. And the Hindu Mahasabha was entirely thrown into the shade. The League emerged as the authoritative mouthpiece of the Muslims and the Congress of the Hindus alone.

In the meanwhile, anti-British feelings reached a climax. A burst-up became inevitable. The I.N.A. trial gave rise to it ; the Royal Indian Naval Ratings and the Royal Indian Air Force raised the banner of revolt in Bombay, Calcutta and Karachi. The backbone of the Imperial structure thus seemed to break down. The army, too, was feeling and experiencing the pangs of freedom.

The British Labour Party after coming into power sent a delegation of ten members of the British Parliament to India. The delegation had a four-week survey and talks with various leaders of all parties. They had invited Savarkar to meet them, but Savarkar was not then in Bombay. He was convalescing at Walchandnagar. The Delegation returned to England on February 10. On February 19 Lord Pethick Lawrence, the Secretary of State for India, announced the

intention of His Majesty's Government to send out a delegation of three Cabinet Members, Sir Stafford Cripps, Mr. A. V. Alexandar and himself, to discuss with the Indian party leaders on the spot the question of solving the political deadlock in the country. On March 15 the British Prime Minister, Mr. Attlee, declared India's right to attain full independence within or even without the British Commonwealth, if she so desired and in respect of the minority problem of India he said : "We cannot allow a minority to place their veto on the advance of the majority." The British Cabinet Mission subsequently arrived in Delhi on March 24. Numerous interviews, discussions and deliberations took place in the Viceregal Lodge. On April 5 Pandit Nehru thundered : "The Congress is not going to agree to the Muslim League demand for Pakistan under any circumstances whatever, even if the British Government agrees to it." What history records is quite the reverse ! Only a few days after this warlike speech, a whole nation witnessed that Nehru pathetically enough ate his words in the end !

Another outstanding feature on the political scene was that Mr. Jinnah represented the Muslims, Maulana Azad represented the Hindus and the Nawab of Bhopal, the princely India. Thus the whole of India was represented by Muslim leaders ! Mr. Jinnah was re-affirming his anti-Indian role, and refused to call himself an Indian even.

Jinnah's lieutenants were not lagging behind. Before the League Legislators' Convention held in Delhi, Gandhiji's Shahid Sahib, Mr. H. S. Suhrawardy, declared on April 9, in Hitleric vein that Pakistan was Muslims' latest, but not the last demand and if the Britishers entrusted the destiny of India to Congress *Junta*, the Muslim League would not allow the Central Government to function even for a day. Another Muslim League leader, Sir Firoz Khan Noon, warned the British Government that the destruction and havoc that the Muslims would do in the country would put into the shade what Chengizkhan had done.[1]

While the discussions and deliberations with the Cabinet Mission were going on at Delhi, Savarkar returned to Poona

[1] A Noted Journalist, *Hopes and Fears* (with a foreword by Dr. Pattabhai Sitaramayya), pp. 21-22.

on April 3, from Walchandnagar slightly recovered from the nervous exhaustion, and was convalescing at the Poona Hotel. On January 20 he had a severe heart attack at Walchandnagar. Sri Bhopatkar saw Savarkar in Poona before he put a memorandum on the 15th of April before the Mission along with Dr. Mookerjee on behalf of the Hindu Mahasabha. The memorandum stated "that geographically, politically and culturally India was one whole and indivisible. This integrity and indivisibility must be maintained whatever the cost and sacrifice be." The memorandum further warned the Mission that partition of India into two or more sovereign States under any guise or disguise would be economically unsound and disastrous, politically unwise and suicidal.

Political scenes were changing with rapidity. A Tripartite Conference consisting of the British ministers, the Viceroy, representatives of the Congress and the League, was held at Simla, on May 12, 1946, but it failed to arrive at any decision. The Mission then came out with a new proposal now known as the State Paper of May 16. This document repudiated Mr. Jinnah's claim for division of India, contemplated a Central Union although with powers restricted only to matters of external affairs, defence and communications, gave full autonomy to the provinces, and provided facilities for the provinces to form themselves into three groups two of which, B and C, were mischievously and evidently conceived as a concession to the League Lord. A Constituent Assembly was to be elected by the Provincial Legislatures for framing a constitution for the Indian State; an Interim Government comprising representatives of the major communities and important minorities was planned; and the States, freed from the crown paramountcy, were to join the Constituent Assembly for hammering out a Union of the provinces and the States. The electorate was divided into the General, Muslims and Sikhs. Thus in the land of the Hindus, there was no electorate named after them in the administration of India.

The League accepted the State Paper on May 22, hoping to work out Pakistan through the proposed groups, and Mr. Jinnah proposed to hold out his hand of co-operation to the Congress. The Congress, too, accepted the Plan of May 16 as it stood, and declared its willingness to join the

Constituent Assembly with a view to framing the constitution of a free, united and democratic India.

Towards the end of June 1946, the Cabinet Mission returned to London leaving it to Lord Wavell to work out the procedure and form an Interim Government. On July 10 Pandit Nehru told a press conference at Bombay that there would be finally no grouping as the Congress held that the provinces should be considered free at the initial stage to opt out of the section or group in which they were placed. This unstatesmanly statement of Pandit Nehru gave a handle to Mr. Jinnah to push his demands, and on July 27, 1946, the League Council resolved at its meeting in Bombay to resort to Direct Action, rejecting the Cabinet Mission proposal which it had previously accepted ! Mr. Jinnah refused to discuss the ethics of violence and non-violence and the League Secretary declared their determination to employ every means in their power to achieve their object. The Sind minister preached destruction and extermination of every one who opposed them.[1] Thereupon the Congress nervously ran to patch up this gulf, and reasserted acceptance of the State Paper fully ! On August 24 the Viceroy declared his resolve to form an Interim Government of sixteen Members out of which six were to be the nominees of the Congress, five of the League and five representatives of the minorities. The Congress took office on September 2, 1946, gave one out of its six seats to the Depressed Classes and one more to a Muslim thus reducing mercilessly the national majority to a minority in the Cabinet, and all this when the Muslim League did not even co-operate in the formation of the Interim Government.

II

The acceptance of office by the Congress put Jinnah in a trap. Jinnah rightly believed that the Congress under its historic leadership of Gandhiji and Nehru would be nervous about the formation of an All-India Government without the co-operation of the Muslims ! Two Muslims were appointed temporarily and one of them was almost stabbed to death at Simla, and he ultimately succumbed. To make the functioning

[1] *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated 29-7-1946.

of the Interim Government led by the Congress impossible, the Muslim League started its Direct Action on August 16, which led to an unprecedented holocaust in Calcutta, well-known now as the great killing, spreading the virus and holocaust over the Noakhali District in Eastern Bengal and followed by looting, kidnapping, forced mass conversions, forced marriages, arson and mass murders of the Hindus in villages and towns in the Eastern Districts of Bengal. Acharya J. B. Kripalani, the then President-elect of the Meerut Session of the Congress, toured those affected parts of Bengal, saw those places of inhuman atrocities and mass murders, and declared in a shuddering voice that they were planned and pre-organized by the Muslims. " War was not like this," wrote a military officer in the *Statesman*, Calcutta. The Congress leaders in power proved utterly unequal to the task of putting down the organized fanaticism of the Muslims. British imperialism had physically disarmed the Hindus, Gandhism had enfeebled them mentally, and the curfew Raj had done the rest for them. Amidst such a confusion and chaos Jinnah shrewdly pushed his lieutenants into the Interim Government without even raising his usual objection to the inclusion of the Congress Muslim in the Interim Government and the fight for Pakistan thus began with renewed force and fire to sabotage the Mission Plan which aimed at setting up an All-India centre, which the Muslim League detested. With a view to dealing a fatal blow at the Plan, the Muslim League leaders including those in the Interim Government spoke and wrote in fire and all this under the very eyes of Pandit Nehru and the Home Member, Sardar Patel ! Mr. Ghaznafar Ali Khan, the Health Minister in the Viceroy's Interim Government, speaking at Lahore, said, " If Mohammad Bin Kasim and Muhammad of Ghazni could invade India with armies composed of a few thousands, and yet were able to overpower lakhs of Hindus, God willing, a few lakhs of Muslims will yet overwhelm crores of Hindus." [1] On another occasion he asked the Hindus to embrace Islam and to save themselves from the holocaust. And yet this communalist upstart was allowed to continue in the Interim Government. Echoes of the terrific tragedies in Bengal were on the lips of even the dying Pandit Madan

[1] *The Free Press Journal*, Bombay.

Mohan Malaviya at Benares. Moved by the multitudes of Hindu refugees, deprived of their homes, wives, children and everything in Bengal, the feelings of the Hindus ran high in every province. In Bihar, the Land of the Guptas, furious riots followed on a terrific scale, so much so that Mr. Jinnah bewailed that retaliation for Bihar would be a catastrophe. Dr. Moonje warned the Hindus at a meeting in Kurukshetra that the Hindus were facing a civil war.

Lord Wavell, the Commander-in-Chief and Pandit Nehru flew to the scene in Bihar. Sardar Patel resorted to drastic action, Nehru threatened the Bihar Hindus with bullets and aerial bombardment, the police opened fire on several occasions and all the Government forces suppressed ruthlessly the uprising in Bihar. Gandhiji went one step further. He threatened the Bihar Hindus with a fast. Nehru said that if the Bihar Hindus wanted to kill the Muslims, they should first kill him. There was wide discontent among the Hindus at the well-meant but incompatible attitude of the Congress leaders who helplessly witnessed and heard about the massacres of the Hindus in Bengal. Even Congress-minded papers resented this attitude. The *Yashoda* in its weekly issue (Vol. VI, No. 4, 78 Gandhian era) observed in its editorial: "If Nehru's body must fall, it must fall at Noakhali. If Gandhiji is to fast, he should fast in Noakhali. The dark figures of the great tragedy enacted at Noakhali must be brought to justice." The paper further observed in its News and Notes that Noakhali bled, and nobody went near the place till there was no more to bleed. And then the Viceroy and other dignitaries conducted post-mortem examinations and gave their verdicts so obviously devoid of truth that they could deceive nobody. The Weekly added in its last article: "But the role of Gandhiji throughout is as untenable as it is incredulous. Till the communal flare in Bihar, he was passive. Only to Bihar he issues his clarion call for repentance and good behaviour on penalty of his penance to slow death." The Weekly concludes: "No other explanation can be offered for his guilty inactivity over the East Bengal affair."

All this account is narrated only as a matter of history. The author is not out to justify, nor is it needed to do so, the

attacks made by the Hindus in Bihar on other religionists. However, he cannot but feel the unbelievable passive attitude on the part of the Congress leaders in power towards the atrocities committed by the Muslims elsewhere for the same reason; for violence, whenever, wherever and howsoever it occurs, must be condemned. That violence which provokes the subsequent violence must be curbed and condemned first. And without doubt Congress leaders lamentably failed in this sacred duty. If the forces of justice and humanity are real and potent in your breast, you cannot remain a passive spectator at one time and an active defender at another.

Savarkar returned to Bombay on August 5, 1946. By now Hindu-Muslim riots had become a common affair in Bombay. The Hindu Sanghatanists were still valiantly defending the hearths and homes from the organized mass fury of the undeclared civil war by the Muslims in Bengal, Bihar, Bombay and the Punjab. Sri Rajendra Roy Chaudhari, President of the Noakhali District Hindu Sabha, died heroically in defence of Hindu homes and Hindu honour. Hindu Sabhas all over India arranged for the relief of the Noakhali Hindu sufferers with the active aid of the perennial, patriotic and pan-Hindu sympathies of the Hindu leaders like Raja Narayanlal Bansilal, Bombay.

Soon after the Muslim League's joining the Interim Government, a first class crisis developed. After their entry into the Interim Government, the Leaguers refused to join the Constituent Assembly.

Sardar Patel got indignant and drove Pandit Nehru to the Viceroy. The Viceroy, who had, to quote the words of *the Times of India*, Bombay, made untiring efforts to get justice and 'even more than justice for the League,' was charged with conspiring with the League. Patel had also thundered at the Meerut Session of the Congress that either the League must join the Constituent Assembly or get out of the Interim Government. There seemed no way out. So the British Government invited Mr. Jinnah and Nehru to London for a Conference for the solution of the legal points arisen out of the interpretations put by the contending parties. Accordingly Mr. Jinnah and Pandit Nehru flew to London. There with his legal acumen Mr. Jinnah carried the day and the vociferous

Pandit Nehru failed. This perturbed Sardar Patel and he thundered that the Congress would not accept the British Government's statement of December 6. But the All-India Congress Committee in its Session on January 15, 1947, swallowed that bitter pill too when Sardar Patel remained absent. Now the decision given by the British Government threatened the legal existence of the Constituent Assembly. It meant that the constitution could not be valid unless it was approved by the Muslim League !

In the meantime, the Hindu Mahasabha Session was held in the last week of December 1946, at Gorakhpur, under the presidentship of Sri L. B. Bhopatkar. The Hindu Mahasabha reiterated its demand for a Sovereign Independent State and its faith in the indivisibility and integrity of India. In December 1946, the Constituent Assembly opened its Session and Dr. Jayakar was heckled for his conciliatory attitude towards the League by those very Congressmen whose history was full of national surrenders and who within a few months of getting into power betrayed the nation's integrity. No less a personality than Dr. Ambedkar vigorously castigated the Congress leaders in the Constituent Assembly 'for killing a strong Centre themselves.' The misunderstanding of the political issue, and the indecisive, short-sighted and vacillating policy on the part of the Congress leaders dismayed the political firmament.

In the midst of such a gloomy, grave and despairing situation came the realization of the correctness of the fearless, far-sighted and unbending lead that had been given by Savarkar. Dr. S. P. Mookerjee in his letter of February 10, 1947, wrote to Savarkar : "If the Hindus had only listened to your call, they would not have remained as slaves in the land of their birth." The confusion and the prevailing chaos had begun to trouble the mind of Savarkar. He gave a sigh of relief at the Pan-Hindu consciousness as regards self-respect which the land of the Guptas had shown and he, therefore, sent a donation to the Bihar Provincial Hindu Sabha 'for the relief of the heroic Hindu sufferers of Bihar.'

The British Cabinet was now fast turning the pages of history. In February 1947, the British Government announced their intention to take necessary steps to effect the transfer

of Power to responsible Indian hands by a date not later than June 1948. The termination of Lord Wavell's wartime appointment and the appointment of Viscount Mountbatten as his successor were also announced simultaneously. The defeated forces of Akhand Hindusthan were now striving valiantly to rally again. In the first week of the following month, Savarkar blessed the Hindu-Sikh unity sponsored by Master Tara Singh in his forlorn attempts for maintaining the integrity of India, and expressed the hope that "Guru Govindsingh would steel the hearts of the Hindu-Sikh brotherhood and strengthen the hands in fighting for the freedom and the integrity of India."

The undeclared Muslim uncivil war that disgraced the Indian brotherhood, nationhood and motherhood was still raging on. The big guns of the Congress had lost control over the situation. The Home Member, Sardar Patel, true to his soldierly frankness described the grave situation when he said that almost every Muslim servant in the Government was Pakistani. His advice in a helpless mood was that everybody should be a policeman and protect himself.

By this time the demand for a separate Province of West Bengal was being hotly discussed and debated in Bengal. The partition of Bengal, which was ruthlessly condemned forty years ago, was demanded now by the kith and kin of Khudiram Bose. What a queer fate! On March 22, 1947, in a statement Savarkar "supported the demand for a separate Hindu Majority Province in West Bengal owing loyal allegiance to a consolidated, strong and sovereign Central Hindusthan State."

As declared by the British Government, Lord Wavell made his exit from India towards the end of March 1947. The New Viceroy came in. Savarkar wired to the new Viceroy, Lord Mountbatten, urging him to consult the Mahasabha President and Master Tara Singh before any fundamental changes affecting the Hindus were effected. Savarkar knew that India was fast approaching a momentous decision. He, therefore, urged the Bengal Hindu Sabha and the Bengal Hindus on April 4, 1947, to demand a separate new Hindu Province in West Bengal and to expel the Muslim trespassers from Assam at any cost. He also demanded that the contiguous Hindu

Majority Districts of Sind should be joined to the Bombay Province. Savarkar concluded his statement by saying that the Muslim minority would be given the same kind of treatment as would be meted out to the Hindu minorities in the Muslim majority provinces.[1]

Savarkar feared that Assam which was tagged on to the Eastern Group of Pakistan would fall a victim to Muslim aggression. Assam was threatened by the Muslim Direct Action on the one hand and the Muslim influx into the province on the other. So he again warned towards the end of April 1947, Sri Bardoloi, the Prime Minister of Assam, and Sri Vishnudas, the Revenue Minister, not to surrender an inch to the Muslims and asked the ministers to eject every Muslim trespasser old and new to a man. Both of them duly acknowledged the telegrams and with due assurance. In the same month Savarkar asked the Bengal Hindus 'to beware of Gandhiji's scheming platitudes avowing open hostility to the demand for framing Hindu majority Provinces in the East and West of India.' The new Viceroy interviewed the leaders of the Congress and the League and flew to London in May 1947. On the eve of his departure Dr. Mookerjee had put his demand for a separate Hindu Province in the West of Bengal. The British Cabinet approved the blueprint of the Viceroy and the swift procedure for its execution.

Now the final decision was reached. Savarkar knew that the last moment to be or not to be had come. On May 29, 1947, in a fervent and forlorn appeal to the Congressites Savarkar urged them not to betray the electorates and India by agreeing to a scheme involving vivisection of the Motherland. He reminded them that they had not been elected to the legislatures on the issue of partition and their Constituent Assembly had also no right *ab initio* even to consider such a proposal. Hence he urged upon them to resign their seats and posts and to seek re-election on the clear-cut issue of Pakistan or Akhand Hindusthan, if they were for the partition of India. Savarkar further suggested to the Congress leaders that they might demand a plebiscite to decide such a momentous issue involving the life and death of the nation and the destiny of future generations. But who was there

[1] *Free Hindusthan*, Bombay, dated 6-4-1947.

in his senses in the Congress to consider such a proposal in a democratic way when the wordy Congress democrats were reeling in the drunken joy of party and personal power ? What other country has witnessed such a betrayal ?

The Congress leaders were now in a mood of speedy surrendering. Speaking at the U. P. Political Conference, Pandit Nehru declared on April 29, 1947 : "The Muslim League can have Pakistan if they wish to have it." Sardar Patel said on April 14, 1947, in Bombay : "If India should be partitioned, it could only be done after mutual discussion amongst ourselves and in a peaceful manner." Dr. Rajendra Prasad showed anxiety for the division of the defence forces. The Congress leaders spoke and acted as if the integrity and indivisibility of Hindusthan was a matter of the past with them ! So now Unity and Integrity of India was the concern of Savarkar alone !

The Viceroy soon returned with the sanction of the British Cabinet for his proposal and on June 3, 1947, the Prime Minister of Britain from London and the Viceroy from Delhi announced simultaneously their new plan known as the June 3rd Plan. The New Plan contemplated the creation of one or two Dominions by August 15, 1947, provision for separate Constituent Assemblies, partition of the Punjab and Bengal provinces, referendum for Baluchistan, the North-West Frontier Province and the Sylhet district of Assam to decide what dominion they would join.

Savarkar was now fighting a lost cause. But as he was the truest son of India, he tried to tap every corner, every source, every means to avert the political matricide. The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha met at Delhi on the 7th and 8th June 1947. Savarkar sent a message to President Bhopatkar on June 8, saying that the Hindu Sabhaites and the Sanghatanists could never willingly sign the death-warrant of the integrity of Hindusthan and urged Bhopatkar to continue the struggle for re-annexing the revolting Moslem provinces and for creating Hindu majority provinces in any case—Pakistan or no Pakistan—in Bengal and the Punjab, and for rejoining the contiguous Hindu majority Districts of Sind to the Bombay Province. In the interests of Akhand Hindusthan the Congressites, he said, should be called upon to resign

their ministries and posts and seek re-elections forthwith on the issue of Pakistan, but they should not be allowed to concede Pakistan and to betray the electorates. He also urged the Sind Hindus and other minority communities in Sind to press on with all possible means for the separation of Hindu majority Districts in Sind and for the re-annexation of those districts to the Hindusthan Union.[1]

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha also reiterated its belief: " India is one and indivisible and there will never be peace unless and until the separated areas are brought back into the Indian Union and made integral parts thereof." The Mahasabha Working Committee further demanded a referendum in the Hindu majority areas in Sind and in the Chittagong Hill tribes area in East Bengal like the one in the Sylhet District in Assam to allow the territories, if the majority in those respective areas desired, to accede to the Indian Union.

The Congress leaders were now well prepared for their final consent to the onslaught on the unity of India. In a written message read out after the usual daily prayer-meeting in Delhi, Gandhiji declared on June 9, 1947, that he was not opposing the Congress acceptance of the new British Plan. Nobody wondered at this news. This was a foregone conclusion! And the All-India Congress Committee in its Delhi Session on June 14, 1947, accepted the 3rd June Plan by a resolution supported by Pandit Nehru, the idol of the nation, who had unequivocally professed and declared in the vein of Lincoln to defend the integrity of India. This resolution was upheld by the nationalist Muslim, Maulana Azad, now supporting with divine satisfaction the creation of a Communalist State out of India. Azad described the Plan as the only way to settle India's problem as the *Congress was committed, he recalled, to the principle of self-determination* and was against coercing any unwilling areas to join the Union! But who got the Congress committed to that resolution? History would record that all these Congress brand nationalist leaders were at one in coercing other people in accepting Pakistan.

The Socialists in the All-India Congress Committee remained neutral. They had no opinion to offer on such a

[1] *Free Hindusthan*, Bombay, dated 8-6-1947.

vital issue in the life of the nation! The lonely opponent in the All-India Congress Committee opposing this nefarious black decision and deed was Babu Purushottamdas Tandon who appealed to the All-India Congress Committee that though the Congress Working Committee had failed them, yet the A.I.C.C. had the strength of millions behind them and they must reject the resolution the acceptance of which would be, he said, an abject surrender to the British and to the Muslim League. Sardar Patel's support to the partition of India was a complete transfer scene from sword to surrender.

Gandhiji put an ultimatum before the A.I.C.C. He threatened them either to accept the resolution conceding Pakistan or to replace the old tried Congress leaders. He advised them to accept the Plan and added that it was their duty to stand by their leaders. To the Congress leaders their prestige was more important than the destinies of the nation and the fate of the millions! That has been an unfortunate characteristic of the Congress leadership. Savarkar repeatedly exposed this fact and warned the people to remember that the Congress party and their leaders were not greater than the nation. Equally forcibly Dr. Ambedkar told the Congress bosses in the Constituent Assembly that in deciding the destinies of a people, the dignity of the leaders or men or parties ought to count for nothing.

But Gandhiji threw his whole weight and the A.I.C.C. accepted the resolution which accepted the creation of Pakistan![1] And lo! Gandhiji practised what he preached. Did he not tell the nation ten years ago "Needless to say, the Congress can never seek the assistance of British forces to resist the vivisection. It is the Muslims who will impose their will by force, singly or with British assistance, on an unresisting India. If I can carry the Congress with me, I would not put the Muslims to the trouble of using force. I would be ruled by them, for it would be still Indian rule."

Gandhiji was a truth-seeker. Who is a truth-seeker? One who clings to truth and right even if the very heavens fall. But Gandhiji, the voice of truth and the voice of non-violence, who considered even coercing or forcing one's views on others

[1] Full report of the A.I.C.C. meeting in *The Times of India*, Bombay, dated 16-6-1947.

a sin, hit the last nail on the coffin of Akhand Hindusthan and the resolution was passed. According to Gandhiji, Pakistan was an untruth and the truth-seeker became a party to untruth in broad daylight. To Gandhiji Pakistan was a denial of God, but he deserted and denied God. The fundamental rights of the people, the demand for a nation-wide plebiscite, the call and voice of democracy were stifled to death by the unrelenting divine dictatorship. And describing this event next day, *the Free Press Journal*, Bombay, one of the chief spokesmen of the Congress, flashed in a full banner line the news 'Nation's Leaders Betray Country's Cause!' This was the return gift of the Indian National Congress to the Motherland which had suckled it at her breast!

There were two men in India who could have smashed the proposed scheme of the vivisection of India. They were Gandhiji and Savarkar. But because of shattered health, a cruel misfortune, the perfidy and levity of those countrymen who regarded party above country, Savarkar failed despite his superhuman efforts for a period of ten years. With the greatest party at his beck and call, Gandhiji could have blown up the scheme of Pakistan had he meant it from the bottom of his heart. Gandhiji believed that nothing was impossible for a Satyagrahi. He, therefore, could have easily declared with Luther that 'peace if possible, but truth at any rate.' But the unfortunate politician in Gandhiji, who always failed and failed, got the upper hand and stifled the truth-seeker in Gandhiji, and Gandhiji too failed. On the one hand Gandhiji proved the maxim of Voltaire who said 'he who seeks truth should be of no country' and on the other, he fulfilled the prophecy of his Guru, Gokhale, who foretold that Gandhiji would exercise enormous influence on the common man, but when the history of political parleys would be written disinterestedly, he would go down in history as a great failure.[1]

Yet the shriek of Akhand Hindusthan was not extinct. At the behest of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha an All-India anti-Pakistan Day was observed on July 3. 1947, to register a protest against the vivisection of the Motherland. There was a considerable response throughout India. Big cities like Bombay, Poona, Delhi and others almost

[1] Satyagrahi, *Graha and Tare*, p. 60.

suspended all market and business activities. Prabhat ferries were taken out, protest meetings were held condemning the vivisection of India, black flags were hoisted denouncing the partition as a betrayal of the aspirations of the great patriots and great martyrs who had laid their lives at the altar of a great cause. On August 2, 1947, Savarkar made a very pathetic and appealing speech before a mammoth meeting at Poona. He told the vast multitude of audience that in a way they were also partly responsible for the vivisection of their Motherland along with the Congress leaders; because they did not repudiate their leadership at the proper time, and added that appeasement would never stop and satisfy the aggressor. He recalled how the Congress lead sacrificed democracy and nationalism for communalism. He began this appealing speech in a very touching tone and said: "Since you have gathered in thousands to hear a leader like me who has attained ill-fame owing to my deathless resistance to the creation of Pakistan, I believe, there is yet hope, for the survival of this Hindu nation."

Savarkar now accepted the defeat of the forces of Akhand Hindusthan. The battle was lost, but the war for United India was still to continue and Savarkar stood up for it! He thought it proper to record once again his protest against the vivisection of India. So a Hindu Convention was held on August 8, 1947, at Delhi. Savarkar went to Delhi by air. This was his first air flight. Dr. N. B. Khare, the then Premier of Alwar, was to preside over it and the Maharaja of Alwar, a staunch Hindu and self-respecting ruler was to inaugurate it. But owing to the treacherous revolt of the Meos in the Alwar State for a Meostan, both of them could not come to Delhi and so Savarkar presided over the Convention.

In his Presidential Address to the Convention Savarkar exhorted the Hindus never to accept Pakistan just as they never accepted the British Raj and asked them to continue their struggle for Akhand Hindusthan. Savarkar warned the Hindus that if they did not rise and awake to the real danger ahead, there would be many more Pakistans hereafter. Indeed he must have had before his mind's eye some four crores of Muslims still remaining in Hindusthan who rioted, agitated and were responsible for the demand for vivisection of Hindu-

sthan in no small measure! Savarkar further declared that there should be no rejoicings on the 15th of August 1947, since the Motherland would be actually torn asunder on that day and the results of the disintegration were likely to lead to bitter feelings and ill-will.

The Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha thereafter exhorted the Hindus not to celebrate the 15th of August 1947, as Independence Day, in view of the untold sufferings that had been inflicted on millions of people in different parts of the country by the orgy of plunder, murder and conversion, and the indiscreet arrests and detention of leaders and workers amongst the Hindus in all parts of the country.

One point respecting the Herculean opposition Savarkar sponsored to the creation of Pakistan needs to be noted. It was the Hindu Mahasabha led by Savarkar that alone strove to avert the vivisection of Hindusthan. Let it be recorded that the Socialist party which then functioned in the Congress kept a culpable silence at the time of such a historical, momentous issue in the life of the nation and remained neutral in the A.I.C.C. when the Congress passed the resolution conceding the vivisection of India. The Arya Samajists and the R.S.S. remained mere passive spectators and refused co-operation, official or otherwise, even in peaceful demonstrations against the vivisection of the Motherland, as if nothing had happened in the life of the nation to which they pledged their blood, brains and bones morning, noon and night!

III

The 15th of August 1947 came, and was celebrated by the Congressites as a day of national rejoicing. And no doubt it was a great day in the history of the world as it saw the birth of the biggest Muslim State under the sun and as a great force was released in Asia in the form of Indian Independence. The Mahasabhaites hoisted only the Mahasabha Geruwa flag with the Kripan and Kundalini to display the asserting will of the Hindus. Savarkar hoisted the new tricolour flag of Free India with the Dharma Chakra of Buddhism as well as the Geruwa

flag with Kripan and Kundalini; one State Flag and the other a Symbol of Akhand Hindusthan.

Great must have been his exultation at the disappearance of the Union Jack and the discomfiture of the Khadi flag with its Charkha and the coming up of the national flag. Through Savarkar, the Prince of the Indian revolutionaries, thousands of martyrs must have saluted the Flag of Indian Independence for which they had laid their lives. In saluting and flying the State Flag Savarkar showed his sense of and love for democracy. To his perturbed followers he said that they should hoist the Bhagwa flag with the Kripan and Kundalini as the State flag only after they could get it approved by the whole nation in a democratic way. Till then this new State Flag represented the Divided India and the Geruwa flag with the Kripan and Kundalini the Akhand Hindusthan and so he had hoisted both.

It may be remembered that Gandhiji did not approve the State Flag of Free India adopted by the Constituent Assembly; for the Dharma-Chakra had replaced his pet Charkha and the silk had replaced the rough Khadi. Gandhiji expressed this in an article in the *Harijan* dated the 3rd August 1947 and lamented that the Congress flag, i.e. the tricolour Khaddar flag with the Charkha on it had not become the national flag and added that if the new flag of the Union did not represent the Charkha and Khadi, it was valueless in his opinion! What a love for democracy! Savarkar's efforts to replace the Charkha by a Chakra were not fruitless. In a telegram to Dr. Rajendra Prasad, the Chairman of the Constituent Assembly, who happened to be the chairman of the Flag Committee of the Constituent Assembly, Savarkar had requested them to have at least a strip of the saffron colour and a wheel-Chakra instead of the Charkha on the State Flag. He did not expect the Constituent Assembly dominated by the Congressites, to adopt the Geruwa flag with Kripan and Kundalini on it as the State Flag. It may be recalled here that Madame Cama of the Abhinava Bharat had unfurled a tricolour flag as the flag of Indian Independence as early as 1907 at the Socialist Conference in Germany!

Yet another of Savarkar's warning that breakers were ahead came true with a vengeance. Simultaneously with the

national rejoicings, a terrible wave of wholesale massacre and brutality spread over the Punjab and Sind. Unprecedented violence was let loose. Pakistan had not been established without any gruesome immediate effect. The tidings that came from the Punjab were grim and blood-curdling. The massacre of men, women and children went on unabated.

Millions were uprooted from their native soil, their hearths, their homes, torn from their dear ones and robbed of all their possessions. Nobody was sure of the morrow. Burnt houses, looted shops, broken skulls, smoking ruins, blood-smeared corpses, and mutilated bodies scattered all over towns and villages, spoke of the blood bath and barbarity unsurpassed in other times and climes. The country rang with horror.

The visionary in Nehru was rudely shaken. He admitted in his broadcast on August 19, 1947, that 'nearly the whole of India celebrated the coming of Independence, but not so the unhappy land of the five rivers in the Punjab.' He also said that 'there was sufficient disaster and sorrow, arson and murder, looting and crime of all descriptions.' Short-sighted Congressites were fiddling while the West Punjab was burning and bleeding. Nehru appealed to the Hindus and Sikhs of the West Punjab not to make mass migration, and he asked the people to desist from individual retaliation. He also declared that if it should be retaliation, it should be Government retaliation, which meant war. Pandit Nehru was not far away from the truth because in the upper half of India there was terrific retaliation as a result of insufferable repercussions and emotions evoked by the holocaust in the East and in the West. During this crisis Pandit Nehru condemned with burning hatred everything that had the appearance of Hindu Sanghatan. In a Delhi speech he declared that he would even resign and fight out the Hindu Fascists who clamoured for a Hindu State and he further said that he was sure that those Fascists would go down the way the Hitlers and Mussolinis went.

Replying to Nehru on all these points, Savarkar said: [1] "What were the thousands of Hindu-Sikhs to do when faced by an imminent danger of being massacred in cold blood, looted, burnt alive, forcibly converted, in short, of being exterminated as a racial and national being by the most

[1] *Free Hindusthan*, Bombay, pp. 16-18; 69-71.

barbarous attacks of an organized, dangerously armed and fanatically hostile foe and especially when the State as such was nowhere in evidence so effectively as to render any the least protection to them ?" While in the West Punjab the dangerously armed Muslims in their thousands were parading in the streets, in towns and cities and raising terror-striking slogans 'Haske liya Pakistan, Marke lenge Hindusthan,' and were planning to capture the East Punjab and Delhi, the Congressites, observed Savarkar, were celebrating their bloodless revolution brought about by the vivisection of India, although the Hindu Sanghatanists kept shouting that danger was ahead and that this was no time to rejoice when they were stranded on the top of a volcano already in eruption. He added: "Under these circumstances what wonder is there that millions of Hindu-Sikhs prompted by instinct of self-preservation and animated by the spirit of Pan-Hindu consolidation rose in arms in the East Punjab, in Bharatpur, in Alwar, in Patiala and in Delhi itself and responded to the best of their might and means so furiously and effectively as to checkmate the Muslim hoards from attempting an invasion of the East Punjab, threw them on their defensive and saved Delhi itself from being captured by the Muslims concentrated there. If Panditji and his Congressite comrades are still safe and secure in their seats, they owe it to this brave fight which the Hindu Sanghatanist and Sikh forces gave in the nick of time. And still it is he who unblushingly comes forward to deliver to them a sermon on the exclusive right of the State to retaliate. Had a Shivaji or a Ranjit Singh been at the helm of the State, he could have demanded with propriety that the people should leave the right of retaliation in his hands alone. But when the puny Pandit tries to demand it in the accent of Shivaji, it strikes as funny as it would do if a pigmy standing on his tiptoes tried to rival a giant in height."

And as to the threats of resignation by Nehru, Savarkar said that if the Government was handed over to the Sikh-Hindu Sanghatanist coalition, a cabinet could be formed which would be not only more efficient than the present

one, but also will prove to be absolutely indispensable to face the stark realities as noted above.

As regards the misrepresentation of Hindu Raj by Nehru and his hatred for everything that was Hindu, Savarkar said it was a stunt on the part of Gandhist ministers, leaders and papers to cover their dismal and disastrous failure in protecting the life, property and honour of our nation. Savarkar proceeded : "The demand for the Hindu Raj, these pseudo-nationalists say, is communal, stupid, medieval, theocratical, a menace to the progress of mankind itself! But they conveniently refuse to tell us what they precisely mean by Hindu Raj, before they characterize it in the above-mentioned vilifying terms. Nevertheless, assuming for the sake of argument that the demand for a Hindu State deserves this condemnation on all these counts, may we ask them : was not the demand for a Moslem State at least equally condemnable on these very counts ? Did not the Moslems base their claims to own the Pakistani Provinces on the ground that the Muslims constituted the major community predominating there ? "

Savarkar further replied to Nehru with equal force and fire : "But instead of fighting against that demand for a Moslem Raj you actually abetted the crime of cutting integrated India right into two halves directly on communal lines which the Anglo-Muslim conspirators perpetrated and handed over Pakistan to the Moslems so ceremoniously, with such ease and grace as you would hand over a cup of tea to a welcome guest! With what face now can you vilify the demand for a Hindu Raj on this very count even if it could be said to possess all the above traits ? " Savarkar goes on : "A Pathani or Nizami Muslim Raj is to Gandhiji a cent per cent Swaraj. But a Hindu Raj ! O no ! It would be communal, fascist, anti-national and an anathema ! " Savarkar further observes : "You contend further that our country and our State cannot be called Hindusthan and Hindu State as some non-Hindu minorities too are citizens thereof. But how is that in spite of the presence of the Hindus, Christians, Parsees and other non-Muslim minorities in its territory all of you and Gandhiji in particular keep *salaming* and saluting

that newly carved out Muslim Rai as Pakistan which avowedly and literally means a Holy Muslim Land, a Muslim State ? Is it not a fact that almost all States and nations are called after the names of what the League of Nations termed 'National Majority' predominating in each ? Nor have you yourselves ever felt any qualm of conscience in recognizing Baluchistan, Waziristan, Afghanistan, Turkastan or the Turkish State as such in spite of the presence of non-Muslim minorities there ? How is it then that the very mention of the name of Hindusthan or the Hindu State alone takes your breath out as if you were smitten by a snake-bite ? "

As for the threat of Nehru that he would fight out those who clamoured for Hindu Raj as Hindu Fascists, Savarkar retorted : " The Hindu Sanghatanists cannot be terrorized by the threat of such carpet-knights as the Pandit and his clan." He concluded his historic reply to Pandit Nehru : " The choice therefore is not between two sets of personalities but between two ideologies, not between Indian Raj and Hindu Raj but between Muslim Raj and Hindu Raj, between Akhand Hindusthan and Akhand Pakistan. The Hindu Sanghatanist ideology alone can, therefore, save our nation and re-establish an Akhand Hindusthan from the Indus to the Seas."

The Congress leaders in their zeal to carve out a secular State, which is in fact a noble ideal, fell to de-Hinduising Hindusthan. They denounced Hindu Raj, but brought about a religious State, a theocratic State, Pakistan. They saluted and blessed Pakistan, but cursed with burning hatred the appellation Hindusthan. They started to speak of the people by calling them Muslims and *non-Muslims of India.* Their speeches, addresses, statements and official announcements described and referred to the Muslims as Muslims and to all others as the non-Muslims of India. So burning a hatred they had even for the word 'Hindu' and the appellation Hindusthan that they dropped out those appellations as if the Hindus in their Homeland were a dying, vanishing race like the twentieth century empires.

At a post-prayer meeting in Delhi on June 12, 1947, Gandhiji told his audience that Pandit Nehru refused to call the *non-*

Pakistan areas as Hindusthan and Gandhiji further said: "The Muslim majority areas might call themselves Pakistan, but the rest and the largest part of India need not call itself Hindusthan." Could un-Hindu nationalism go further? Savarkar pitied this inferiority complex and the cowardly attitude on the part of the Congress leaders. Savarkar never said that he wanted to base the Hindu State on Hinduism. The concept of Hindu Raj was not based on Hinduism but on Hindutva. And Hindutva and Hinduism were two quite different things. Rationalists would never say that Savarkar would stand for a State in which a Shankaracharya would be authorized to make laws and deal with justice. Is there such a degraded man as will say that Savarkar ever said that he wanted to deal with the so-called Depressed Classes and measure the ideals governing man and woman with Manu's rod? According to Savarkarism, the word Hindu connotes nationality. You may be a Buddhist, a Jain, a Sikh or an Arya Samajist by faith, but by nationality you are a Hindu. The term Hindu State corresponds to the terms the German State, Japanese State, Afghan State, Turkish State. You gladly repeat the words Muslim State, Mogul rule, Pakistan, Turkish State. Where is the harm if you call the Bharatiya State as the Hindu State? Moreover, Savarkar meant by the word Hindu Rashtra, a State grown out of the historic cultural background. The national majority after whom the State is named must follow their bent, must grow according to their nature and blood by reconciling their past with the present, shaping their future in the light of science. But Savarkar always insisted that none should hustle or terrorize the national majority into shaping their present or future.

Why should Pandit Nehru and his colleagues decry this kind of Hindu Rashtra in which every citizen will be equal in the eyes of law? Pandit Nehru and Gandhiji especially who started their political careers with a Theocratic Movement, the Khilafat, and ended it in creating a Theocratic State, Pakistan, on the basis of religion should have any the least objection to it. And at last Pandit Nehru declared at Lucknow in October 1947: "Congress wanted to establish a secular democratic State in the country. Naturally in such

a State the predominant culture and outlook would be governed by the great majority of the Hindus in the population." *But according to Savarkar the culture of the majority in India was the culture of Rama, Krishna, Kalidas, Vikram, Bhavabhuti, Pratap, Guru Govindsingh, Shivaji and Vivekananda, and not the culture of Taimurlang, Mohamad of Ghazni, Mohamad Ghori, Babar, Aurangzeb and Tipu !*

While these controversies were going on, confusion, fanaticism and retaliation were reigning supreme. It is necessary to reveal here as briefly as possible the significance of this insurmountable crisis as this was indirectly responsible for Savarkar being involved in the most heinous trial. Gandhist leaders proved to be unequal to the occasion and historic necessities. People now realized that Gandhism was an illusion. Gandhiji himself realized too late that what the nation followed was not non-violence but passive resistance. He expressed this at a meeting in Delhi. Nehru said that the nation had to wade through ocean of blood and tears. Such was the crisis and such were the times that people showed a profound disbelief in and dislike of Gandhism which seemed till yesterday the ruling belief of the majority. The blood, tears, sighs and sorrow proved that Gandhism was a dreamland. The situation was utterly volcanic and it disclosed that the whole range of consequences was the outcome of those beliefs, opinions and actions. People seemed now unwilling to sacrifice their present ease or near convenience in the hope of securing higher advantages for others and honour of tomorrow. The magnitude of the issues and height of interests involved was such that there was a stirring shock in the realm of the national mind. Perturbed by the atrocities, imbecilities and the terrific holocaust that marked the course of the period, even the great Congress leaders were chilled in their political beliefs ! They now realized that mere height of aim and nobility of expression did not move the matter-of-fact world.

K. M. Munshi, who claimed to have followed the Mahatma, while reviewing the situation in the Freedom Special of his *Social Welfare*, observed : "Last thirty-five years, we have been brought up on a slogan : naturalness and inevitableness of Hindu-Muslim unity. That this was a wishful thinking has

been proved in Noakhali, Bihar, Rawalpindi—in a hundred villages, by tons of thousands of men, women and children fleeing for safety. The Muslim—a hard realist—knew and exploited the hollowness of the slogans; the Hindu cherishes it still. Hindus love words and ideals." What a melancholy epitaph on Gandhism by a Gandhist! How fitting yet flagrant, how frank yet ferocious, how realistic though belated! The terrific shock also evoked a spontaneous remark from Babu Purushottamdas Tandon. Tandon declared while speaking at a meeting in Bareilly that Gandhiji's doctrine of absolute non-violence had proved to be useless and was greatly responsible for the partition of India.

Even the *Bharat Jyoti*, a well-known English Weekly and a strong spokesman of the Congress in Bombay, bewailed in its editorial dated October 26, 1947, under the caption 'Barter not Truth': "Today, Gandhiji is a living witness to the failure of his political mission. His failure is the measure of his departure from truth, in his implementation of truth." The editorial concludes: "Gandhiji resisted partition of India, but like Yudhishthira, by a play of words, secured the nation's ratification of Partition; he, like Yudhishthira, is witnessing hell's torments. Power of truth is great; lie's punishment is greater. So, barter not, truth."

In the meanwhile people who were filled with a sense and anxiety for security spoke in terms of strife and survival. One furious and reckless mob stoned Gandhiji's residence at Calcutta twenty-four hours before the dawn of freedom! The furious mob even shouted "Gandhi, Go Back." In Delhi, Pandit Nehru and other Congress leaders were stunned to hear later on at the time of Gandhiji's last fast the slogans of the angry crowds shouting 'Let Gandhi die'. The principle of absolute non-violence had gone with the wind. People were puzzled over the words and deeds of the Congress leaders. India was fighting Pakistan in Kashmir not with the spinning wheel or with cotton balls, but with deadly bullets and destructive bombs. Gandhiji's prayer-meetings were now-a-days abandoned, disturbed, heckled and routed. Pickets had to be posted at Gandhi's residence in Delhi to protect Gandhiji, the symbol of non-violence. C.I.D. in plain dress guarded Gandhiji's post-prayer meetings. Savarkar had nothing to

do with these violent mob demonstrations nor with the newspapers' smashing criticism of Gandhism. That was the growing opinion in the minds of the people and the columns of the Congress press. Not that the people were in a mood to listen to Savarkar. There was confusion, indecision and misjudgment of the issues in the minds of the people and their leaders and their press.

And such a crisis was capped by Gandhiji's famous fast which he started on January 13, 1948, for the reinstatement of the Muslims in their houses at Delhi, for the restoration of desecrated mosques to their former use and for other five reasons, and as a sequel the Government of India led by Congressmen was forced to pay Pakistan rupees fifty-five crores which had been loudly decried and refused. The *Modern Review* a Calcutta monthly, famous for its balanced views all over the world, began its editorial notes in its issue of January 1948 with a pertinent question: "The time has come when our trusted leaders, including the Father of the Nation, have to be asked for a clear reply to a plain question. Where does the Hindu of the Indian Union stand today and what does freedom mean for him? Does he possess along with others the democratic birth-rights by which a State has to be ruled and administered for the greatest good for the majority, or is he there merely to serve as so much fuel for a burnt sacrifice—to be used for "conscience-fodder," so to say, by his leaders, just as the totalitarian Fuehrer used his people as cannon-fodder?" The *Review* proceeds: "It is the Hindu who did by far most of the fighting for liberty and offered by far the vastly greater part of the sacrifices. Then why should his interests be sacrificed at every emotional impulse of his elders and leaders?" The note puts a query: "A state cannot be run on the lines of a Passion-play, and what would avail the working of a miracle in the minds of the recalcitrant infinitesimal minority, if thereby the trust of the hundreds of millions of the majority be betrayed?" Referring to the fast of Gandhiji, the *Modern Review* concluded its note in a grave judgment: "Mahatmaji's fast will, we are sure, attain its object for the time being but the results would be futile and disastrous in the long run, unless Pakistanis mend their ways. Indeed, this fast will enhance communal bitterness a

thousandfold on this side when the people realize the futility of their sacrifices, and would make the ultimate and inevitable clash horrible and catastrophic beyond all measure, unless Mahatmaji can work his miracle in Pakistan as well."

And in the midst of such an atmosphere of extreme gloom, confusion and disaster, Nathuram Vinayak Godse shot Gandhiji with a revolver while Gandhiji was going to the prayer ground in the compound of Birla House at Delhi in the evening at 5-30 on Friday, January 30, 1948.

CHAPTER XX

The Red Fort Ordeal and After

With the shots fired by Nathuram Vinayak Godse disappeared one of the greatest political figures from the stage of world politics. The act was committed in broad daylight, in a public place, in the sight of a multitude by a man dressed in khaki bush jacket and blue trousers. The newspapers described him as a batchelor of thirty-seven with medium height, fair skin, square jaws, a resolute and sober face, serious flickering eyes, a high forehead, close-cropped hair, all giving the appearance of a man of serious purpose.

The news of the assassination of Gandhiji spread like wild fire. It was indeed tragic, tearing and terrific. A wave of shock and grief passed over the whole country like an earthquake. Shops were slammed in, flags lowered, cinema shows cancelled. Vivisected and broken-hearted Mother India shed piteous tears for her great son, as does a mother for her son despite her own malady.

Depressed looked the whole world for a while. With wide mouth it paid its fitting tributes to the memory of the great man. The Indian minorities were distressed. The Muslims said they were orphaned. The Anglo-Indians bemoaned the loss as never before. The Bohra head priest grieved, and the Afghan Sardars were moved.

The reaction of this terrific act on the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. was too severe and drastic. In his early youth Godse was a worker of the R.S.S. and later, he was a prominent member of the All-India Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha. He was a well-known journalist in Maharashtra and the editor of a Marathi Daily, the *Agrani*,—the *Leader*—changed to a new name, the *Hindu Rashtra* at a later stage. Better known as Pandit Nathuram Godse, this editor was a staunch Savarkarite, and was fairly known as the vanguard and lieutenant of Savarkar. But when the vivisection of Mother India was declared as a settled fact, in his extreme love for the Hindu Nation, Nathuram Godse

repudiated even the saner leadership of Savarkar. Naturally, the attention of the hooligans was riveted upon men and institutions of his erstwhile association in Maharashtra. Furious crowds pulled down and burnt Hindu Sabha flags, destroyed Local and District Hindu Sabha offices, burnt printing houses and studios belonging to the Hindu Sabha leaders, attacked persons of Hindu Sabha persuasion and particularly persons from the clan of Godse; shops and houses of the Hindu Sanghatanists were in flames and at some places even personal and party enmity under this plea or that pretext was vented on men, women and children. And all this in the name of Gandhiji whom they worshipped as the embodiment of peace, mercy, truth and non-violence!

Men of lesser mettle promptly declared their disassociation from the Hindu Mahasabha. Some office-bearers of Local or District Hindu Sabhas resigned and severed their connections with the Hindu Mahasabha. A dusk to dawn curfew was enforced in Poona, the city from which Nathuram Godse hailed. Wrath was on its round, malice on its wings, and political revenge on its prowl. In the Deccan States the long-awaiting disgruntled souls of some non-Brahmins saw their opportunity, and they poured out the vials of their vengeance in the name of Gandhiji on Brahmins in particular and the Hindu Sanghatanists in general, who happened to be sympathizers, workers or leaders of the Hindu Mahasabha. There was trouble and tension in a few cities between the Hindu Sabhaites and the R.S.S. on one side and the violent crowds of Gandhian persuasion on the other; but the havoc wrought by the assaults committed by interested or incited gangs especially in the States of Kolhapur, Sangli and Miraj was terrific, unprecedented and unparalleled. There was hardly any bloodshed or burning incident in other Provinces, but the massacre of a whole family consisting of an old man, his son and his grandson for the fault of bearing the same surname as Godse and the atrocities, arson and looting committed in the name of Gandhiji in Maharashtra were so dastardly and ghastly that these dark deeds of the so-called followers of Gandhiji would put the inhuman crimes committed by the furious followers of Robespierre into the shade. Had it not been for the stern and efficient handling of

the situation by Sri Morarji Desai, the Home Minister, Government of Bombay, the rioters and looters would have turned Maharashtra into a veritable graveyard.

And what about the first and foremost Hindu Sabhaite, Savarkar ? On the morning of Saturday, January 31, 1948, at about 10, fury was let loose in many parts of the city of Bombay, which destroyed Hindu Sabha offices, burnt their property, attacked the residences of the Hindu Sabha leaders and workers, and stormed and attacked the house of Savarkar known as *Savarkar Sadan.* The ringleaders of this furious mob of about 500 strong broke into Savarkar's house through a door on the rear side. They swept down into the compartments on the ground floor occupied by Bhide Guruji, a former Secretary to Savarkar, a Hindu Sabha leader of note, and editor of an English Weekly, the *Free Hindusthan.* This was the left-hand side block on the ground floor of the one-storeyed house of Savarkar. Savarkar was in his bedroom on the first floor. He knew what the mob meant towards him. In his youth, he had faced such wild drunken mobs in London streets when he was agitating for Indian Independence. The ringleaders of the mob were running amuck on the ground floor. But the presence of mind of a Savarkarite, who was present at the moment, hoodwinked them and in the meantime the police arrived on the scene and a bloody scene was averted.

But what was the state on the first floor during this hour of attack ? It is characteristic of Savarkar that he keeps quiet, cool and collected in times of grave dangers. His courage rises with difficulties. Armed with courage and available legitimate weapons in his hands, Savarkar stood in his bedroom, his wife standing by his side. He asked his son Vishwas to seek safety somewhere while he defended the house. But true to his blood the young boy refused to run away from the scene and save his life. This was the time for Vishwas to show his mettle. In front of his father, on the threshold of the bedroom stood the young boy prepared to face the mob, determined to protect his father and to die in the action if necessary. Had Savarkar's bodyguard Appa Kassar been present on the scene, crimson would have been the compound of Savarkar's house. But he was already arrested along with Gajananrao Damle, personal secretary to Savarkar, in the

early hours of Saturday, eight hours after the assassination of Gandhiji.

Defeated in its bloodthirsty designs, the mob set upon the residence of Dr. Narayanrao Savarkar in the same locality. Dr. Savarkar was stoned till he fell down in a pool of blood. He suffered severe head injuries and was admitted to hospital, and his family was removed to a distant place.

Nathuram Godse's lieutenantship was bound to recoil upon Savarkar. A thorough search was made of Savarkar's house on January 31. Savarkar kept himself in his bedroom and the police minutely searched his residence. A police officer asked Savarkar to accompany him to a place of safety. Savarkar flatly refused to do so and told the officer that his person would carry unrest and agitation wherever he went. He told the police officer that he would not move an inch, and added that two armed guards were enough to scare away the mob ; but if the police did not want to do so, then, said he, he was ready to lay down his life for his principles. Savarkar also issued a statement on January 31, in which he said that the news of the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi was too shocking and sudden and he appealed to the people to stand by the Central Government of Free India and maintain order in the country.

From February 1 to February 5 throughout the country there was a general round-up of the Hindu Sabha leaders and workers. The R.S.S. was outlawed and its leaders and workers were also arrested. Even Sri R. K. Tatnis, the famous editor of the well-known Marathi Weekly, the *Vividhavritta*, Sri Jamnadas Mehta and Sri K. N. Dharap were put behind the bars though they had no active connection with the Hindu Mahasabha or the R.S.S. But Tatnis and Mehta had fearlessly opposed Gandhiji and the Congress on the question of Pakistan, and Dharap was a legal celebrity of Mahasabha persuasion. All the three were, however, set at liberty by the High Court of Bombay on Habeas Corpus applications on their behalf. Excepting L. B. Bhopatkar, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, Sri G. V. Ketkar, Editor *Kesari* and *Mahratta*, Poona, and Sri R. N. Mandlik, President of the Maharashtra Provincial Hindu Sabha and Member of the Bombay Legislative Council, all prominent Maharashtrian

Hindu Sabha leaders were put in jail. The total number of persons arrested in this general round-up in all the Provinces and the States was said to have exceeded 25,000. Such a huge round-up for a single act was never witnessed in India at any other time in her history!

On the night of February 4, the police officers got Savarkar medically examined. The doctor declared that Savarkar was keeping fit, though Savarkar had been suffering throughout the previous year from low fever and heart-ailment, and was even at that time running temperature. A few hours after this, in the early hours of February 5, came a police van to Savarkar Sadan. Savarkar was told that he was placed under arrest under the Bombay Public Security Measures Act. He nodded assent and said that before entering the van he desired to go to the lavatory. The officers hesitated. Savarkar smiled and said: "Do not be afraid. I am now an old man and you should not fear a repetition of Marseilles, nor is there any occasion for it." The officer inspected the W.C. after Savarkar came out of it, but could find nothing.

All sensible persons condemned the act of assassination. And a few hours before his arrest, Savarkar too had issued another statement endorsing the joint statement of Bhopatkar and some other Members of the Working Committee of the Hindu Mahasabha regarding 'the gruesome assassination of Mahatma Gandhi' and said, "I, too, as one of the Vice-Presidents of the Hindu Mahasabha subscribe to their feeling and condemn unequivocally such fatricidal crimes whether they are perpetrated by the individual frenzy or mob fury." Savarkar concluded his statement with a warning: "Let every patriotic citizen set to his heart the stern warning which History utters that a successful national revolution and a newly-born national State can have no worse enemy than a fatricidal civil war, especially so when it is encompassed from outside by alien hostility."

Savarkar was lodged in the Arthur Road Jail, Bombay.

Now some of the local Congress-minded papers assumed the role of justice, usurped the rights of the Court and wickedly enough described Savarkar as the brain behind the murder of Gandhiji. Some openly flashed the news that Damle and Kasar had a hand in the plot. And all this when the whole

affair as to how far Savarkar was the brain, Apte the brawn, and Godse the heart and hand was being investigated by the police.

The police officers led a blitz in a group on Savarkar, their combined wily and wild genius being at grips with the genius of Savarkar. Savarkar was calm and collected. Like De Valera, the country for the independence of which he had striven and sacrificed his life for fifty long years, threw him into jail after the birth of a Free State. Savarkar was naturally overwhelmed with these feelings. He declined to avail himself of the facility of home food. No interview with him was allowed to his wife or his only son till March 23, and nothing was heard or known about him by the public except the volcano of obloquy let loose by hostile journals of Congress persuasion.

One man with intrepid courage and devotional vigilance devoted himself to the defence of Savarkar amidst the all-round erupting volcano. That man was Sri S. V. Deodhar, a local advocate of Bombay. He interviewed Savarkar on February 6 and took his instructions. For a long time Savarkar was not charged with any specific offence. But on March 11, 1948, Savarkar was again placed under arrest in the Arthur Road Jail by the Delhi Police under a warrant from the Delhi Presidency Magistrate on a charge of being one of the conspirators in the assassination of Gandhiji. When Savarkar was produced before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, for a further remand, the daring advocate moved an application for bail, but it was refused. Deodhar, however, secured permission for Savarkar's wife and son to interview him, and accordingly they saw him in jail for the first time on March 24. It was through the efforts of Deodhar that Savarkar could execute a general power of attorney in favour of his son, thus facilitating the arrangement of funds for his household affairs and for his defence. Savarkar was now in full control of every nerve. On May 18 he made an important affidavit before the Chief Presidency Magistrate, Bombay, regarding a group photograph that was taken by the police with Savarkar in the centre and Godse and Apte on either side together with the other alleged conspirators who had been arrested on different dates in the first half of February and brought to Bombay for investigation purposes.

By now the leader and famous advocate in Bhopatkar was on the move with all his legal acumen and with all his moral courage. Sri Mandlik also was bringing the issue of Savarkar's arrest to the forefront. At the time of the passing of the Budget, Mandlik severely criticized the Bombay Government in the Bombay Legislative Council for denying Savarkar even the freedom of interview with his family and legal counsels. On April 3 Mandlik asked the Home Minister, Sri Morarji Desai, as to why the confiscated property of the Savarkars was not returned to Savarkar in appreciation of his past services in the cause of Indian Independence, as was done in the case of other patriotic sufferers of Congress persuasion of even recent period. The Home Minister replied that the Government did not propose to return the property to Savarkar and on a supplementary question, he added sarcastically, though Savarkar's case was now *sub judice*, that Savarkar's present disservice was more than his past service. Upon this Mandlik sprang up and asked the Home Minister to define Savarkar's 'present' disservice to which the Home Minister had referred; but there was no reply. Savarkar's must be a rare case, a case of one of the greatest patriots under the sun wherein the property confiscated for his struggle for national freedom was not returned to the patriot even after the nation had become free. Men of lesser patriotism and later-day struggle were given back their confiscated properties by the Congress Ministries; but it seemed as if the Congressmen in the Ministry, who were themselves not politically born nor were the makers of their Ministries out of their swaddling clothes when Savarkar stamped the pages of world history with the cry of Indian Independence, were not even desirous of doing Savarkar bare justice, let alone honouring the greatest patriot of our day.

II

In the meantime, news appeared in the *Times of India*, Bombay, that Government were weighing the evidence regarding Savarkar's complicity in the plot. After three months and a half, the preliminaries were completed. And at last, for want of proper legal opinion, the Government of

India were led to rope in Savarkar, one of the greatest political figures for all times, with the other alleged conspirators. A notification in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* dated May 15, 1948, declared the names of the nine accused among whom flashed the name of Savarkar as the eighth accused. The notification also announced that Sri Atma Charan, I.C.S. was appointed a Special Judge to try the case in the historic Red Fort at Delhi. The trial was expected to begin towards the end of May 1948.

The tide of mob violence almost ebbed in April 1948. But the atmosphere was still full of dread. The Public Security Measures Act held its sway all over the Province. The defence of Savarkar was the uppermost thought for his family and the Mahasabha leaders of Maharashtra. The nerve of the Hindu Mahasabha leaders in Maharashtra did not give way. History has witnessed that in a great crisis, Maharashtrian leadership keeps its nerve and mind. So was it proved during the historic days of Rajaram and post-Panipat period. Bhopatkar, Ketkar and Mandlik rose to keep up the traditional spirit. Sri Jamnadas Mehta, who had played an important role in effecting Savarkar's release in 1937, rose to the occasion and played a very effective role in this trial also! The part Sri Gajananrao Ketkar played with his colleagues in solving the deadlock regarding Savarkar's defence was as skilful and courageous as it was spirited and masterly. It was through his qualities of head and heart that the issue of the Defence Fund was brought to the forefront so that the Defence Fund was volunteered even by farmers, villagers and students in instalments of rupee one or two amounting to a lakh in the end. Hindu Sanghatanists in Bengal, Punjab, Madras and other Provinces, too, at a later stage joined the Defence Committee in collecting the Defence Fund as a token of moral support.

Just before the commencement of the trial, all the accused, who were then in Bombay, were taken to Delhi on May 24. Savarkar was alone taken to Delhi the next day by air, accompanied by two medical experts and oxygen tubes. All the accused were lodged in a specially selected part of the Red Fort and it was declared to be a prison. It was also declared that the Court would hold its sittings in a hall in the

upper storey of a building in the Red Fort, the famous Fort where the Moguls held trials and where recently the I.N.A. leaders were tried. The Court was well furnished and arrangements for accommodation of the Court visitors and for the accused were specially made. The Court room was fitted with microphones for making the proceedings audible. Admission to the court was regulated by passes available on production of a certificate of fitness from a Magistrate or a Gazetted Officer. Passes were valid for one day only and visitors and even counsels were liable to be searched at the gate. The Court and its surroundings were guarded by police and military force.

The trial opened at 10 a.m. on May 27, 1948, the day on which Savarkar completed his fateful sixty-fifth year ! Sri C. K. Daphtary, Advocate-General, Bombay, led the prosecution and was assisted by four other counsels. Sri L. B. Bhopatkar, President of the All-India Hindu Mahasabha, an eminent author of many Law Books and a legal celebrity, led the Defence and represented Savarkar, accused No. 8. The principal accused, Nathuram Vinayak Godse, was represented by Sri V. V. Oak, Bar-at-law, Bombay ; Narayan D. Apte was represented by K. H. Mengle ; Vishnu R. Karkare by N. D. Dange, Bombay ; Madanlal K. Pahwa by B. B. Banerji, Delhi, Shankar Kistaya by H. R. Metha (Government) ; Gopal Godse by M. B. Maniar and Dr. Parchure by P. L. Inamdar, Gwalior. Sri G. K. Dua and Sri M. B. Maniar helped Dange and Inamdar and Sri Jamnadas Mehta, Lala Ganpat Rai, Delhi, Sri K. L. Bhopatkar, Poona, Sri J. P. Mitter, Calcutta, and Sri N. P. Aiyar, Madras, assisted Bhopatkar during the trial in the defence of Savarkar, and at the time of arguments Sri P. R. Das, brother of Deshbandhu Das, and a retired High Court Judge, Patna, argued the case for Savarkar. The President of the Hindu Mahasabha was defending its former President Savarkar. Bhopatkar was then seventy and had to forego a lucrative practice at the Poona Bar for months. Political reactions to his brave defence of Savarkar were not without strain. A lesser man would have gone down in standing for such a daring defence which was nothing less than an opposition and resistance to a powerful unfavourable current then in its meridian in the country.

Out of the twelve persons cited in the charge sheet, the first nine were produced on the first day, the remaining three, Gangadhar Dandvate, Gangadhar Jadhav and Suryadeo Sharma were stated to have absconded. When the trial opened, Savarkar looked sober, self-collected, but pale and physically pulled down; Godse, the central figure, wore a scowl; Apte, Karkare, Mandanlal, Badge, Gopal Godse, Kistaya and Dr. Parchure were in good spirits and freely talked with each other in the dock. On the first day the Court acceded to the Chief Defence Counsel's request for a chair to be provided for Savarkar in the dock. Then deciding a legal point raised by Bhopatkar, the judge said that the trial would be treated as if the accused had already been committed to Sessions. The Court met again on June 3 to consider the timings of the sittings, the language of the proceedings, etc., and adjourned to June 22, 1948.

In the meanwhile, the Bombay Public Security Measures Act was made applicable by the Central Government to the Province of Delhi on June 2, 1948, under the provisions of the Delhi Laws Act of 1912 and came into force with effect from June 13, 1947. It was declared on June 14, 1948, that the Special Court at Delhi constituted under sections 10 and 11 of the Bombay Public Security Measures Act as extended to the Province of Delhi was empowered to tender pardon to an accused under a special ordinance XIV of 1948. Accordingly Digambar Badge was tendered the King's pardon on June 21, and Badge turned approver in the case.

On June 22 the trial resumed hearing in the Red Fort. The Chief Prosecution Counsel, Sri Daphtary, in his opening speech charged all the eight accused in the dock with conspiracy, murder and offences under the Arms Act and Explosive Substances Act. The story of the prosecution was that Nathuram Godse was the tool, Apte the brain and Savarkar was the Guru and guide behind the murder of Gandhiji. The prosecution stated that Savarkar was a very well-known name, a leader of a particular line of thought and President for a considerable period of the Hindu Mahasabha. The prosecution further said that his books were numerous and vigorous and were the text books for persons of certain views and thought and some of those books were published

by Nathuram Godse and Apte. The Prosecution Chief added : "It has been well known that he has been no lover, to put it mildly, of either non-violence or of any policy of favouring the Muslim Party." The Chief of the Prosecution concluded : "Evidence is sufficient to prove not only that he had knowledge of what was going to be done, but that it could not have been done except with his complicity."

After the charges were read out and explained to the accused, all the accused pleaded 'not guilty' and claimed to be tried.

The recording of the prosecution evidence began on June 24, and continued till November 6. During the course of his deposition the approver Badge told the court that he had accompanied Apte and Godse to Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, on 14 January 1948, that Godse and Apte went inside with a bag containing the stuff leaving him outside the compound, and returned 5-10 minutes later with the bag containing the stuff. The approver further said in his evidence that on January 15, 1948, Apte asked him in the compound of Dixitji Maharaj, Bombay, whether he was prepared to accompany him (Apte) to Delhi and told the approver that Tatyarao (Savarkar) had decided that Gandhiji, Nehru and Suhrawardy should be finished and had entrusted that work to them. The approver also told the Court that on a suggestion from Nathuram Godse, Godse, Apte and Badge had been to Savarkar Sadan on January 17, 1948, to take the last *Darshan* of Savarkar and while he was sitting in the room on the ground floor of the house, he heard Savarkar saying to Godse and Apte who were coming downstairs, "Be successful and come." On their way back, Apte told the approver, so went the story of the approver, that (Tatyarao) Savarkar had predicted that Gandhiji's hundred years were over and that there was no doubt that their work would be successfully finished. The approver said that he accompanied Apte and Godse to Delhi because Apte told him that it was Savarkar's command. It seemed this was all the prosecution evidence against Savarkar. Badge was subjected to a gruelling cross-examination by Sri L. B. Bhopatkar when the approver said that he regarded Savarkar not only as the leader of the Hindus, but also God incarnate (Devata). He also said that

Savarkar's birthday was celebrated every year as Jayanti Day like Shiva Jayanti and Krishna Jayanti and that he had seen Savarkar only once in 1943. Badge admitted that Bhide Guruji and Gajananrao Damle also resided on the ground floor of Savarkar Sadan.

Out of the few other prosecution witnesses produced to prove Savarkar's complicity in the plot, Miss Shantabai B. Modak, a Maharashtrian actress, who had given a lift to Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte and dropped them near by Savarkar Sadan, on January 14, admitted when cross-examined by Sri Oak that she did not see Apte and Godse entering the compound of Savarkar Sadan. The story of another prosecution witness, Prof. J. C. Jain, Bombay, was that Madanlal Pahwa, who met the professor before the assassination of Gandhiji, had told the Professor that Savarkar had patted him on the back for his work in the Refugee Camp and said 'carry on'. The Home Minister of Bombay, Sri Morarji Desai, and one Angad Singh told the story as related to them by Prof. Jain. As far as Savarkar was concerned, there was no evidence against him except the alleged uncorroborated talk of this Madanlal with Savarkar in all these three depositions. The taxi-driver said in his evidence that he had taken Godse, Apte, Badge and Kistaya to Shivaji Park, Dadar, but he did not know the name of the owner of the house into which Godse, Apte and Badge went. The story of the trunk-phone call from the Hindu Mahasabha Bhavan, New Delhi, to Savarkar Sadan, Bombay, was also narrated by prosecution witnesses. But the call was not meant for the inmates of Savarkar Sadan and so that point was also a failure.

III

After the examination and cross-examination of 149 prosecution witnesses in all, the statements of the accused were heard. On November 8 Nathuram Godse submitted his statement in which he frankly admitted that he fired three shots at Gandhiji whom he considered to be the father of Pakistan. Godse and Apte both denied that they had either seen Savarkar or entered the compound of his house as alleged by

the prosecution. Immediately, on the next day, Godse's 92-page statement was banned by the Central Government. Madanlal denied having seen Savarkar at all as alleged by the prosecution. Kistaya also stated that it was true that Nathuram Godse, Apte and Badge had been to a certain house in Shivaji Park locality, but he added that he did not know to whom the house belonged, nor was it true what the approver told that he (Kistaya) accompanied them to that house; as in fact he did not alight from the car when Badge and others got down and went somewhere in the locality.

On November 20 Savarkar read his 52-page statement in which he said he did not commit any of the offences with which he was charged, nor had he any reason to do so. He solemnly asserted that he was never a party to any agreement or conspiracy as alleged by the prosecution, nor had he any knowledge of any such criminal design.

Savarkar proceeded: "Badge, the approver, alleges that I (Savarkar) had decided that Gandhiji, Nehru and Suhrawardy should be finished. Apte and Godse both deny that they ever told it to Badge and they were never told by me any such things as alleged. There is absolutely no evidence to corroborate Badge's allegation. The first allegation of Badge is thus not only a hearsay, but an uncorroborated hearsay."

Savarkar added that as regards the second sentence which Badge said he had personally heard him (Savarkar) saying to Apte and Godse, "be successful and come back," it was only an inference that it might have been in connection with the conspiracy. Moreover, Apte and Godse, continued Savarkar, both asserted that the story of the visit of the three to his house and the allegation of his having uttered that sentence was but a fabrication and totally false. "Taking for granted," stated Savarkar, "that Badge himself is telling the truth when he says Apte told him that sentence, the question still remains whether what Apte told Badge was true or false. There was no evidence to show that I had ever told Apte to finish Gandhiji, Nehru and Suhrawardy. Apte might have invented this wicked lie to exploit my moral influence on Hindu Sanghatanists for his own purpose." Savarkar further

said that he had never predicted that Gandhiji's hundred years were over, to Apte or to anyone else.

Detailing his personal life and political line of thought since 1908, he narrated his association with Gandhiji since 1908 and he read pertinent extracts from his public statements issued from time to time on the arrest of Gandhiji and Nehru, regarding the murderous attack on Jinnah and pertaining to the sad death of Mrs. Kasturba Gandhi. He also briefly outlined the object of the Hindu Mahasabha of which he was President successively for seven years.

He then referred to the fateful events in 1947 and said: "I had been foremost in leading the movement against the vivisection of India. But in the year 1947 our Motherland was at last divided. However, although Pakistan came into existence yet to counterbalance that loss, by far the larger part of Hindusthan succeeded in achieving its freedom from foreign domination." And when Savarkar came to the point of the vivisection of his Motherland, tears rolled down his cheeks and his voice was choked as he finished the sentence: "The fight for political independence in which as a soldier I too had fought, suffered and sacrificed for the last fifty years in no measure less than any other patriotic leader in my generation, was at last won and a free and independent State was born. I felt myself blessed to have survived to see my country free." He wiped his tears with his handkerchief and continued to read his statement in a low voice. The newspapers flashed the moving atmosphere of the court in these words: "Every one in the court seemed to share the emotions that overwhelmed the Hindu Sabha leader. The whole court was in pin-drop silence."

Savarkar then defined his attitude towards the Central Government. He observed: "No doubt a part of the Mission remained unaccomplished, but we had not renounced our ambition to restore once more the integrity of our Motherland from the Indus to the Seas. For the realization of this ambition too it was imperative to consolidate that which we had already won. With this end in view I tried to impress on the public mind that first of all the Central Government must be rendered strong whatever party may happen to lead it. *Any change in that lead however desirable, should be*

effected by constitutional means alone, for any act of violence or civil strife inside our camp was bound to endanger the state. Revolutionary mentality, which was inevitable and justifiable while we were struggling against an alien and armed oppression, must be instantly changed into a constitutional one if we wanted to save our State from dangerous party-strifes and civil wars. With this motto I wished that the two leading organizations, the Congress and the Mahasabha, which were in fact coming very close to each other, should form a common front and strengthen the hands of the Central Government of our State. To that end I accepted the new National Flag. Though ill, I went to preside over the All-Party Hindu Conference at Delhi and attended the Mahasabha Working Committee. The majority of the veteran leaders of the Mahasabha as well as some foremost Congressite leaders had also been striving to form such a common front in co-operation with me. The Mahasabha Working Committee passed a resolution to back up the Central Government. Dr. S. P. Mookerji, the Mahasabha leader, was already included in the Central Ministry and the step was appreciated by all of us."

As regards the deposition of other witnesses in reference to him, Savarkar said that he did not know Madanlal, neither had he met him, nor had he any conversation with him at any time whatsoever, and since the evidence of Professor Jain, Angad Singh and Sri Morarji Desai was hearsay testimony, he pleaded that it should be excluded entirely from consideration. He pointed out that Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte were men of independent nature as was revealed by the approver and they were not to be led by the nose. He also respectfully stated before the court: "Does it not often happen that some of the followers who actually try to exploit the moral influence of the leaders to further their activities which the leader had never sanctioned? In 1942, in the 'Quit India Movement' some leading workers, who had been close associates of Gandhiji as Congressmen and respected him, resorted to underground violence. I am not concerned here with the question whether such an underground movement against a foreign domination was or was not justified. It is enough to say that Mahatma Gandhi condemned all

underground violence. But masses resorted under the lead of those workers to arson, sabotage and bloodshed, shouting all the while 'Mahatma Gandhi ki Jai'. But even the British Government did not put Gandhiji in the dock for their crime simply because the masses respected him and were doing those very criminal acts and shouting 'Gandhiji ki Jai' and therefore they must have had consulted him."

In the end, Savarkar pleaded that since not a word had been found to incriminate him in the 10,000 letters which the prosecution had seized from his house and since Badge's allegations were uncorroborated hearsay and uncorroborated inference, he prayed the judge to acquit him without the least blemish on his character and order him to be released forthwith.

The accused were then asked whether they meant to adduce evidence in defence. All of them declined to adduce evidence in rebuttal of the prosecution evidence or in support of the statements made by them.

After the statements of the eight accused were recorded, the counsels' arguments were heard from December 1 to December 30, 1948. Nathuram Godse argued his case himself for about three days and laid stress on the point that it was a cold-blooded act of his own and was committed not in consultation or in conspiracy with anybody else and as he had shown no mercy to the man whom he had killed, he concluded, he did not want the court to show any mercy to himself. Sri Mengle argued the case on behalf of Apte, Dange for Karkare, B. Banerji for Madanlal, Mehta for Kistaya and Inamdar for Gopal Godse and Dr. Parchure. Sri P. R. Das, a retired High Court Judge from Patna and brother of Deshbandhu C. R. Das, volunteered his services for the defence of Savarkar and argued the case in a powerful and masterful manner for Savarkar in particular and as regards the point of conspiracy in general. Sure of ultimate success, Das concluded that he did not doubt as to what would be the decision of the court regarding his client. He emphasized that he expected a clean acquittal for Savarkar without blemish on his character. It was a tribute to the broad-mindedness of Sri L. B. Bhopatkar, the Chief Defence Counsel, that although in no way unequal to the occasion in his legal acumen, he made sure of the acquittal of Savarkar, the only object of his

heart and pride by adding strength and influence to the defence of Savarkar through his masterly and thorough cross-examination of the prosecution witnesses and then by putting forth the arguments through the legal genius of Sri P. R. Das.

At last after eighty-four sittings spread over seven long months, the day of judgment dawned on February 10, 1949. Exactly at 11 a.m. the Special Judge, Sri Atma Charan, commenced to deliver his judgment. In the course of the judgment, Sri Atma Charan said: "Vinayak Damodar Savarkar in his statement says that he had no hand in the conspiracy, if any, and had no control whatsoever over Nathuram Godse and Narayan D. Apte. It has been mentioned above that the prosecution case against Vinayak D. Savarkar rests on the evidence of the approver and approver alone. It has further been mentioned earlier that it would be unsafe to base any conclusion on the evidence of the approver as against Vinayak D. Savarkar. There is thus no reason to suppose that Vinayak Damodar had any hand in what took place at Delhi on 20-1-1948 and 30-1-1948."

The learned judge concluded: "Vinayak D. Savarkar: He is found not guilty of the offences as specified in the charge, and is acquitted thereunder. He is in custody and be released forthwith unless required otherwise."

Nathuram Godse was sentenced to death for his deliberate and calculated act. Narayan D. Apte was also sentenced to death as the real brain behind the murder, and the other five accused, Vishnu Karkare, Madanlal Pahwa, Gopal V. Godse, Shankar Kistaya and Dr. Dattatraya Parchure, who were found guilty of conspiracy and abetment, were sentenced each to transportation for life. As soon as the judge rose to depart, all the prisoners fell at the feet of Savarkar in the dock and raised shouts of 'Akhand Hindusthan Amar Rahe; Hindu-Hindi Hindusthan, Kabi Na Honga Pakistan'. It may be mentioned here that later, on June 21, 1949, Shankar Kistaya and Dr. Parchure were both acquitted by the Punjab High Court in an appeal as it was believed that Kistaya did no more than carry out his master's orders and the confession of Dr. Parchure on which his conviction was based, was found to be unreliable and unsatisfactory by the Appeal Court. The appeal of Godse, who again argued his own case

on the point of conspiracy and the appeals of Apte, Madanlal and Gopal Godse, were not granted and eventually Nathuram Godse and Narayan Apte died unrepentantly on the gallows on the morning of November 15, 1949, in the Ambala Prison with the *Bhagavat Gita* in their hands.

Savarkar did not enjoy the trial as he had enjoyed the Nasik Trial thirty years ago. At the fag end of his life he was put into a fiery ordeal. So he had to control every nerve, every muscle and every drop of his blood with his uncommon will power to outlive the obloquy and the ordeal. Like a *yogin*, he wrote his plain letters to his son asking him to be self-supporting and consoling his wife that after the greatest catastrophe they had passed nearly twenty-five years in happiness. He himself had to suffer unparalleled mental torments and agonies and he felt all the while a year and a week the ingratitude on the part of his countrymen, who aimed at damning him in the eyes of the world. That was a burning ordeal. It was therefore quite natural for such a man of great will power and the burning emblem of sacrifice that not a muscle on his face moved as he heard the decision of the Court in the Red Fort.

Savarkar's acquittal was a thunderbolt to his ill-wishers. What a shame! To Savarkarites and Hindu Sanghatanists all over India, his release therefore was an occasion for great rejoicings. Telegrams and letters of congratulations were showered on him from all parts of India and from abroad. Almost all Maharashtrian leading newspapers gave a sigh of relief at the acquittal of Savarkar. So did the Hindu Sanghatanists and other unbiased straightforward newspapers all over India.

But no sooner was the acquittal of Savarkar pronounced, than he was served with a notice under an order of the Delhi Magistrate prohibiting him from leaving the Red Fort area. It was a keen disappointment for the vast crowds that had gathered outside the Red Fort to give an ovation to Savarkar whom they wanted to take out in a procession. A few hours later, by another order under the Punjab Public Security Measures Act, Savarkar was externed and was prohibited from entering the Delhi area for a period of three months and was escorted under police protection to his house

at Shivaji Park, Bombay. The train carrying him reached Dadar, Bombay, at about 10-30 a.m. on February 12, 1949. The news of his departure from Delhi was kept a secret. Yet hundreds of Hindu Sanghatanist workers and leaders greeted Savarkar at the station. Savarkar was put by the police officer, who escorted him from Delhi, in a motor car waiting outside the station, and was driven to Savarkar Sadan. At his house his wife and some ladies waved auspicious lighted wicks around his face in the traditional Hindu fashion and thus ended the Red Fort ordeal!

IV

After taking rest for about a month at Bombay, Savarkar went to Bangalore for a few days for a change. On his way back, he heard the news about the accident to the aeroplane in which Sardar Patel was travelling and about his miraculous escape in the neighbourhood of Jaipur. On reaching Bombay, Savarkar immediately congratulated Sardar Patel on his safety and said in the course of the congratulatory telegram that "the Sardar's life constituted a national asset and his grasp of the realities and his firm hold on the helm had steered the ship of the newly-born Bharatiya State clear of many a rock and shoal." On May 28 Savarkar's birthday was celebrated as usual by all the District and Provincial Hindu Sabhas all over India and some public meetings passed resolutions demanding that Government should institute an inquiry into the causes that led to the prosecution of Savarkar without the least clear evidence against him. Savarkar, however, wanted the fire of acrimony enkindled by his prosecution to be extinguished and so he communicated to the Bombay Government his desire that a curtain be dropped on the whole affair.

Towards the end of May 1949, the Constituent Assembly passed one important article abolishing the separate electorates, reservations and weightages which were based on the invidious racial and religious discriminations. Upon this Savarkar, who was the first nationalist leader to demand this very thing years ago, sent a telegram to Sardar Patel congratulating him for having thus vindicated 'the genuine

national character of our Bharatiya State' and hoped 'that the administration would boldly carry it into effect in letter and in spirit.' Thanking Savarkar in return, Sardar Patel said in his reply of June 2, that 'Government was already doing and would continue to do its best to act accordingly.'

In the middle of July 1949, Savarkar sent a telegram to Sri M. S. Golwalkar, Chief of the R.S.S., extending his felicitations on the withdrawal of the ban on the R.S.S. and on the release of the R.S.S. leader himself.

The Constituent Assembly had by now far advanced in the framing of the constitution and now the question of the appellation of the country, the choice of the script and the Lingua Franca were being hotly discussed in the Assembly and outside. Savarkar wired to the President of the Constituent Assembly his views on the subject. He said: "I am voicing the sense and sentiment of millions of our countrymen when I beseech the Constituent Assembly to adopt Bharat, as the name of our nation, Hindi as the national language and Nagari as the national script." All the three were subsequently incorporated into the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly for the Bharatiya Republic.

Just then Master Tara Singh, who was interned since some months, was released. Savarkar offered him felicitations on his release as he considered that "Master Tara Singh was one of the few leaders who kept up the heroic spirit of our people of the Punjab in the dark days of the partition and saved the East Punjab at any rate for us."

In the same month Savarkar's younger brother Dr. Narayanrao Savarkar, passed away at the age of 61 on October 19, after remaining in an unconscious state for a fortnight from an attack of paralysis. His illness and mental agony dated back to January 1948 when he was murderously attacked by a riotous mob of goondas immediately after the assassination of Gandhiji and from which he never recovered completely afterwards. Next to none in national service, patriotic sacrifice, courage and intelligence, this silver-tongued orator of Maharashtra, who had been during the British regime a symbol of sedition, sacrifice, revolt and terror while his brothers were rotting in the Andamans, died with an uncompromising opposition to the anti-Hindu and un-Hindu forces. It was a

cruel misfortune that Savarkar should witness the last of his brothers consumed by fire.

In the meanwhile, the scattered forces of the Hindu Sabhaites were preparing to hold the annual Session of the Hindu Mahasabha at Calcutta. After a pressing and fervent request from the veteran revolutionary leader, Sri Upendranath Banerjee, who was a co-sufferer with Savarkar in the Andamans and was a Congressman for a long time, and had turned a Hindu Sabhaite after the Hindu Bengal had reaped the fruits of partition, and ardent appeals from Sri Ashutosh Lahiri, Savarkar decided to go to Calcutta, and started on December 21, 1949, to attend the annual Session of the Hindu Mahasabha. Almost throughout the journey, Savarkar had to make brief speeches at several stations to respond to the greetings of the crowds that awaited his arrival. In Calcutta Savarkar was taken out in a huge procession along with Dr. Khare, the President-elect, and Sri L. B. Bhopatkar, the retiring President. Thousands of people participated in the procession. In the Session, too, all attention was centred on Savarkar. His acquittal in the Red Fort Trial had now added colour and a further romance to his already romantic life. Hindu Sanghatanists from all parts of the country gathered in thousands at Calcutta to declare to the whole world that their saviour had at last come back to guide them.

When Savarkar entered the *Pandal*, the huge congregation stood up as if electrified with his *darshan*. It became hilarious while shouting 'Veer Savarkar ki Jai' when Savarkar stood before the mike with his palms characteristically resting on the handle of his umbrella and wearing his brimless black round cap. In his ninety-minute inaugural address to the Session, Savarkar stressed first the point that the Independence of India was a victory and not a political gift from the British. He asserted that the independence was not accomplished by the Congress alone, or the revolutionaries alone; it was, he said, the summation of the struggle, sacrifice and sufferings of thousands of patriots from 1857 to 1947 inside and outside India. He affirmed that India was after all now a Hindu State established under a Hindu Flag with the Dharma-Chakra of the Hindu Race as its State Symbol. He then stressed the need for continuing the Hindu Mahasabha



A huge procession taken out in Calcutta in December 1949 in honour of Veer Savarkar, Dr. Khare and Sri Bhopatkar



Savarkar with Shraddhamata and Dr. Khare in Calcutta (December 1949)



Savarkar with his wife, daughter and son

and exhorted the Hindu youths to join the Indian army, navy and air forces in thousands. He also pleaded for the adoption of constitutional and democratic legal means for the fulfilment of their objectives and appealed to the Hindus not to take the law into their own hands. He suggested that there should be a policy of tit for tat in our dealings with Pakistan and declared : " It is the duty of our people to consolidate our position first, and if we are true to our Mother and Soul, by ten years' time we can restore the territories that have been torn away."

The President, Dr. Khare, proclaimed in his usual fearlessness the re-entry of the Hindu Mahasabha into the field of politics with the ideology of a cultural State and the Hindu Rashtra as its guiding stars and affirmed that " but for the pressure increasingly applied by the Hindu Mahasabha, the Congress could not have abandoned separate electorates or adopted Hindi with Devanagari script as the Rashtra Bhasha."

On January 26, 1950, was inaugurated the Sovereign Democratic Bharatiya Republic under the Presidentship of Dr. Rajendra Prasad. Savarkar issued a statement to the nation on this occasion to commemorate the emancipation of our Motherland from the British bondage. He also congratulated Dr. Rajendra Prasad on his becoming the first President of the Republic. In his congratulatory telegram, he 'placed his services entirely at the disposal of the Republic in any national undertaking and hoped that the foremost task of creating the strongest possible Bharatiya army, navy and air forces to defend our new-born Republic would receive his immediate attention.' Savarkar ended his congratulatory message with the words 'Long live Akhand Bharat.'

In March 1950, the East Bengal burst into a conflagration. The Noakhali tragedies were ruthlessly repeated. As foretold by Savarkar, the birth of Pakistan endangered the peace and prosperity of Hindusthan, led the Indians to agony, misery and sufferings, and Pakistan 'sought every opportunity for expansion.' Moved by these tragedies in the East Bengal, even leaders like Sri Jai Prakash Narayan suggested that our forces should be sent to the disturbed areas if nothing else could stop the carnage. The general opinion in the press and the platform seemed to favour the adoption of some such drastic step. At this juncture, it was declared that

Savarkar was going to attend the East Punjab Hindu Conference at Rohatak in the second week of April. Savarkar was to break his journey at Delhi where the people had planned to accord him an imposing reception.

About this time Pandit Nehru in good faith thought it fit to try his method of negotiations to solve the Bengal problem and invited Mr. Liaqat Ali Khan, the Premier of Pakistan, to Delhi for a parley. The Premier of Pakistan at Karachi in his speech before his Parliament levelled an attack against the Hindu Mahasabha and attributed the East Bengal tragedies to its propaganda and to a Calcutta speech of Sardar Patel in February 1950. And as if to create a calm and quiet atmosphere for his delicate negotiations with the Pakistani Premier, Savarkar who was out of active politics and who had placed his services at the disposal of the Bharatiya Republic, was arrested at Bombay in the early morning of April 4, 1950, under the Preventive Detention Act, hundreds of miles away from Delhi where the delicate negotiations were being spun and was put into the Belgaum District Jail. Sri L. B. Bhopatkar, Sri G. V. Ketkar, Sri Mamarao Date, Sri K. B. Limaye, Sri G. M. Nalavade, and others were also thrown into prison. This action on the part of the Government was resented and condemned by almost the entire press, political leaders, and freedom-loving organizations like the Civil Liberties Union of Bombay. Condemning this action, the *Free Press Journal*, which had never shown even an iota of sympathy with the Hindu Mahasabha, observed: "The offensive against the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. leaders and workers has only one implication. That is, that, Premier Nehru has elected to appease Pakistan and imperil the integrity and the independence of India. The offensive against the Hindu Mahasabha and the R.S.S. has a two-fold purpose; one is to divert India's attention from the policy of appeasement; the other is to create a panic that there is a Hindu conspiracy to rally the progressive elements in support of the policy of appeasement of Pakistan."[1] And all this took place in a democratic India where the fundamental rights of the freedom of speech and of association are guaranteed by the Constitution itself! How long is Free India going to be deprived of Savarkar's nation-building co-operation and powers?

[1] The *Free Press Journal*, dated 5-4-1950.

CHAPTER XXI

The Man

I

The story of Savarkar is the history of resistance, strife, struggle, sufferings and sacrifices for the cause of political, social and economic emancipation of this Bharat Varsha. His is a political career extended over fifty long years. How many of his great contemporaries could see pioneers from Ranade to philosophers like M. N. Roy, could strive for independence of India and yet have the good fortune to see the sun of freedom rise over India ? An active political leader who either saw, talked or discussed politics with thinkers from Ranade to Roy, leaders from Surendranath to Subhas, from liberator Tilak to fighter Achyutrao Patwardhan ! No other life on the political stage of India is marked by so many vicissitudes, punctuated with raging storms and lightning and tantalized with gaping gallows ! This is a political life chequered with romantic threads of sufferings and is fringed with sacrifices. Woven with recollections of the sea and the steamer, it is interspersed with hell-like prison life and is lined with historic arrests, trials and releases. Even one single incident from the matchless drama of Savarkar's life is long, charming and thrilling enough to provide the span for a play of immortal fame.

All his life Savarkar has been bruised, bleeding, burning and bursting. The sea is never tired of rivers. So is Savarkar never tired of sufferings and services. Perhaps no other freedom movement produced such an indefatigable fighter with such an undying love for his country ! Who would be prepared to undergo such unimaginable sufferings, untold sacrifices and face formidable dangers for the mere love of his country ? But it was this very characteristic of the forgetful fit of the destiny of this man that though all the while storms kept raging around him, be it rainy season or spring, yet the sun in Savarkar always broke forth.

Savarkar is an historical personality embodying the duty and beauty of a man of mission and action. His majestic forehead at once reminds you of the forehead of Napoleon who was also a victim of the British imperialistic wrath. One look at the crown of his head and you would at once find a crown in the middle of his head bequeathed by nature herself. His face possesses the effulgent beauty of gold, his frame strength of steel, and his head is a store of the hymns of revolution. His small luring and penetrating eyes hollowed in the high cheek-bones have the depth of the sea, lightning of the sky, sweep of the storm and effluence of the volcano. His eyes peep and probe into the lessons of the past and they unfailingly warn the Hindus every time against the tragedies of the present and the impending catastrophes of the future. The eyes shine like a lighthouse indicating the unfailing direction to the ship of the nation for its movements in order to avert the horrors of the approaching wreck. The square jaws have witnessed his suppressed thoughts, his burning mission, unfulfilled aims, unflagging industry, frustrated plans, stormy life and unexampled sacrifice. His short, proportionate handsome figure looks like an image carved out of the bones, blood and brains of the great Hindu thinkers and martyrs from Hindu History. His head bald and glistening, his chest broad and invincible, his waist lion-like, his neck short, his hands small and commanding with an excellent rosy colour and his height five feet four inches, all this a marvellous creation of God and Earth. The artificial beauty of an actress or the exaggerated handsomeness of Kashmiri politicians would pale before his natural handsomeness.

And gifted with such a personality and blessed with a life full of extraordinary achievements and undying episodes, he moved among men as a mighty mesmeric man. Savarkar was the first Indian student who was rusticated from the hostel of an institution aided by the British Government and the first Indian political leader, who publicly performed a bonfire of foreign clothes. He was again the first political leader of India to daringly proclaim absolute political independence of Hindusthan as her goal at a time when the mere word Raj or Swaraj spelled ruin for the speaker. Savarkar was the first Barrister, who was refused the degree on account of his

political line of thought by the British Government and was the first graduate to lose the degree of an Indian University for his love for independence. Savarkar was again the first Indian leader to invest the problem of Indian Independence with international importance. He was the first Indian author, who earned a distinction in the domain of world literature as his work was proscribed by the Governments of two countries even before it was printed or published. Savarkar was also the first rebel leader of India who refused to recognize the authority of the British Court of Law. Savarkar was the first political prisoner in the history of the world the issue of whose arrest was fought out at the International Court at the Hague. Savarkar is the first political prisoner in the political history of the world, who was sentenced to half a century's transportation. Savarkar was the first poet in the world, who, deprived of pen and paper, composed and wrote his poems on the prison walls with thorns and pebbles, learnt by heart with Vedic tenacity more than ten thousand lines of his poetry for years till they reached his country through the mouth of others, and showed how since the dawn of humanity the great Aryas kept the sacred *Vedas* circulating from one generation to another by word of mouth. Indeed, the legend of the memory of Macaulay, who could repeat all Demosthenes by heart, all Milton and practically the whole of the *Bible*, would find a formidable rival in Savarkar.

Have you heard this typical Mahratta leader at a mass meeting ? Dressed in immaculate white, with a black round cap on his massive head, a black umbrella in his right hand and a fresh newspaper in his left, the deep well-known long whiskers on his lustrous serene face and eyes encircled in a golden frame, Savarkar's personality is at once outstanding in any vast multitude. What a vast difference in Savarkar, the lonely giant in his solitary room and Savarkar, the leader and ruler of the masses ! The orator and prophet gets the upper hand and Savarkar is always a hero to his valets !

Orators feed themselves on history. In it they seek inspiration. They draw their own conclusions from history. History develops their visions, heroes feed them on heroism and their incomplete dreams fan their emotions. Demosthenes,

Pitt, Burke, Daniel Webster, Hitler, and Churchill belonged to this type. Savarkar, too, belongs to the line of this immortal race of orators.

Savarkar enters a mass meeting. He comes to the platform walking the gait of a hero, his way opening before him in an anxious sea of masses. He bows to the masses. The masses move with waves of emotions as if the moon were in the sky. He rises to deliver his message. He never comes with a set speech. He usually speaks on the spur of the moment. He is like quick-silver. One listens to him in pin-drop silence or misses the train of his arguments. His voice is a great asset and has a peculiar ring. His eyes glitter and glow when he becomes animated.

Savarkar mercilessly overthrows the fallacies in the foggy logic of his opponents. His opponents are bewildered at the torrent of his eloquence. At every sentence you feel an opponent reeling. The flag goes to Attock, to Assam, to Cape Comorin. His speech tears the mask of shams and confronts you with naked realities. His speech has the whirl of a storm. His humour is merciless. He throws logic and reasoning at you through emotion. The audience thrills. It claps. It moves. His eyes flash fire. His face glows with the mission that burns bright in him. The masses mark the stout heart, watch the steel frame, iron will, majestic forehead and the boundless sincerity of a personality that heralded an era into the history of Indian political struggle and social revolution.

Savarkar's remarkable political speeches and masterpieces were delivered before the Peshwas' Shanivarwada, Poona, on the Ghats of Cawnpore or in Delhi. They struck his critics dumb, and cleared doubts and dusty thoughts. It is characteristic of Savarkarian speeches that they sound as though the Muse of oratory danced, played and wept with the feelings, joys and sorrows of Savarkar ! His masterpieces begin with such earnest and gripping sentences in a deep sonorous voice and end with such a dramatic touching rise and fall in his voice and moving tone that old men shed tears, youths are filled with unbearable pathos and women piteously sigh. His magnificent oratory, clear-cut thoughts and inspiring messages have often sealed and unsealed historic decisions. He defeated and left a wreck of Gandhiji's draft resolution advising the

withdrawal of the Hyderabad struggle before the Sholapur Conference of the Arya Samaj in 1939. His concluding speech at the Nagpur Session of the Hindu Mahasabha delivered with a heart-force and a burning mission inspired the inter-provincialists and new-comers. Leaders like Dr. Mookerjee were magnetized during the course of one of such speeches at Calcutta. Not only leaders, lawyers and literary figures listen to him spell-bound, but foreigners also are enchanted with the magic wand of his oratory. While Savarkar was on his way to Shillong, an Englishman travelling in the same train, heard the deafening greetings of the people to Savarkar at every station. At one station the Englishman requested Savarkar through his secretary to make a short speech; for he had heard in England, he said, that Savarkar was one of the greatest orators. He heard Savarkar speak before a crowd at the next station, introduced himself to Savarkar and wishing him all success went away. Fortunate were those who heard him speak on the 'War of Independence of 1857' after his release in 1937. Those who heard his Presidential Address at the Marathi Literary Conference in Bombay were lucky. Those who attended the Non-Party Conference in Bombay and Poona need no introduction to understand why Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru came to Savarkar's chair at the time of the Bombay Non-Party Conference, thanked Savarkar from the bottom of his heart and said: "It is you who saved the Conference." Of Savarkar the *Amrit Bazar Patrika*, Calcutta, said that Savarkar was a man of Mission. The *Sunday Standard*, Bombay, described him as an orator of the first order. It added: "Few others in the whole of India can thrill and sway his listeners as this simple-looking Hindu leader can. He is an orator of the first degree; and it is a pleasure to hear him speak, his eyes flashing, his lips quivering, his weak body trembling with emotion." India has enjoyed the scintillating speeches of Srinivas Sastri, the sweet flow of Jayakar, the roarings of the tireless Satyamurthi, the powerful appeal of Maulana Azad, the high-flown emotional speeches of Devi Sarojini Naidu, the seriousness of the visionary in Pandit Nehru and the chattering train of Rajaji, but India witnessed the culmination and perfection of oratory in Savarkar, rightly called the Indian Demosthenes.

II

If you want to study the history of the Indian Revolution, the history of the social revolution in Maharashtra, and the history of the literary movement launched to purge the Indian languages of foreign influence and words, and keep our Lingua Franca undefiled, you must study Savarkar. Maharashtra has not produced a more volcanic brain than Savarkar, a leader whose outlook is absolutely rational and up-to-date. According to him, rational outlook must obtain control over the political, social and military life of India, if India is to survive the struggle for existence. Savarkar welcomes the machine age, believes in mechanized agriculture and modernized industry. He wants India to prepare and equip herself physically, mentally, technically, mechanically and militarily, not with the object of enslaving other nations, but for liberating the enslaved peoples of the world from all kinds of shackles, superstitions and imperialism. During the last two decades no leader has waged more ruthlessly an unrelenting war against the barriers of caste system in schools and in public places, in intercaste dinners and in social intercourse, and has as much suffered, toiled and faced dangers and dispraise and even curses as Savarkar in the annihilation of untouchability. That is why they call him a fusion of the great Mahratta leaders of modern times who heralded a new epoch in the history of India. The spirit of Nanasahib, who fought the War of Indian Independence of 1857, the sweep of Wasudeo Balwant Phadke who first raised an armed revolt in Maharashtra for the establishment of an Indian Republic, the mental force of Chiplunkar, the reformative zeal of Agarkar, the sacrifice and struggle of Tilak, the service of Gokhale and untiring work of Kelkar, all these find an echo in the alchemy of Savarkar. Who made Shivaji what he was? Who moulded Tilak? Paranjpe or no Paranjpe, Tilak or no Tilak, Savarkar would have been Savarkar!

Savarkar is a Hindu among the Hindus, but of the Chitor type. He is proud of his heritage and grateful to it. He finds his guiding star in Lord Krishna, the glory of Hindusthan. He sees in Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj the fount of inspiration. He regards Rana Pratap as the fire of patriotism, Guru Govind

Singh the sire of martyrdom, and Sadashiv Bhau the righteous sword of Hindusthan. To defend, to enliven and to raise the Hindu Nation is to him a national, patriotic, righteous, just, human and a sublime cause.

Savarkar does not hate you because you are an Englishman or a Mohammedan or a Jew! He has paid glowing tributes to the skill and might of the Britishers. Savarkar was the only leader in India, who envisaged a State for the floating race of the Jews ever since 1908, and in 1923, he wrote in his famous work *Hindutva* that 'if the Zionists' dreams were realised, if Palestine became a Jewish State, it would gladden us almost as much as our Jewish friends.'[1] Since his release in 1937, he had been a staunch supporter of the idea of a Jewish state in Palestine and in 1947, no Indian leader was as happy as Savarkar except possibly Master Tara Singh to see the emergence of a Jewish State in Palestine. It was curious that Jinnah, who fought for the partition of India, paradoxically opposed the partition of Palestine, and Gandhiji and Nehru, who favoured the Arabs with an undivided Palestine accelerated and accepted the vivisection of India! As for the Parsees and Christians, Savarkar had no grudge against them. He not only appreciated their co-operation and patriotic outlook, but also cherished hopes of building with them an Indian State in which the religion, culture and language of the minorities would be preserved. He never cherished to impose disadvantages upon the non-Hindus. That is why he met and discussed in a frank, free and accommodating spirit with the leaders of the Parsees, the Jews and the Christians who wanted to remain in India as loyal citizens enjoying equal rights with the Hindus. But as he rightly suspected the separatist tendencies and extra-territorial ambition of the Muslims, he was not prepared to give them an inch more than they democratically deserved and for this outspokenness he was called a communalist by those who were pro-Muslim. Events have proved now the correctness of Savarkar's stand and the futility and falsity of the appeasing policy of the pro-Muslim patriots who claimed the appellation nationalists for themselves. Some of the pro-Muslim Hindu leaders and journals drum that the medieval days of the Peshwas are gone. But they forget that

[1] Savarkar, *Hindutva*, p. 112.

had Savarkar lived during the Peshwa rule, he would have conquered back the land of Gandhar and it is equally true that he would have bravely faced the Todarmals, Birbals and Mansinghs.

It is, however, a fact that Savarkar is an echo of the unjustly suppressed, exploited and disturbed soul of the Hindus. His soul has become one, and is synchronized with the sorrows and joys of Hindudom, the Hindu world. Whenever something harms or jeopardizes the interests, property, honour and lives of the Hindus, he gets restless. So perennial is his love for the Hindus, so eternal is his hope of their great future and the role of the Hindus in the building of the peace and prosperity of the world, that he is infuriated whenever he hears that the Hindus are suppressed and their just rights denied ; and when that feeling is on him, he shows signs of a violent dislike for those who trample upon the Hindu rights, oppress them and make aggressions on them.

Savarkar has been waging war since his early youth. His war is against those who trample upon the just and fundamental rights of the Hindus in their Homeland. His war is against those who deface and disgrace humanity in this land. His was the war of a Nation against all intruders, disruptive men and bogus World Federalists whose practice was divorced from their professions and whose actions led to the break-up of the solidarity and the integrity of Hindusthan. And therefore Savarkar is a terror to tyrants, foe to injustice, an antidote to anti-nationalists and an unforgiving critic of the pro-Muslim politicians in India. To him a disruptive patriot or a Pakistani Hindu is synonymous with a pretender or a traitor respectively and literally. Savarkar is opposed to Pakistans as heat is to cold. His political philosophy is as different from Gandhism as chalk from charcoal. He wants a place for the Hindus on the map of the world as Bharat Bhoomi or Hindusthan and so he says that Hindusthan belongs to the Hindus. What is wrong in it ? Can the Hindus rightfully say that Britain, Germany or Turkastan belongs to them ?

Savarkar is an electric powerhouse. You cannot touch it. His conversational gift is nothing less than dictatorial, but tinged with utmost rationalism. To begin with, he will patiently listen to you with some pertinent queries and then

would do most of the talking. Looking to the force of his arguments, logic and reasoning, some say he is vain and egoistic. But the fact is that by temperament he is assertive, unyielding and dictatorial due to a feeling of superiority complex, a belief in the rightness and justice of his cause and due to his strong convictions and mellowed thoughts. And strong personalities are always so. Bernard Shaw once silenced his critics who charged him with vanity and egoism. He told his critics that had any of them gone through the trials and hardships which he himself had undergone, he would have been hundred times more vain and egoistic than Shaw himself. One-tenth of Savarkar's trials, tribulations and talents, and the critics would have been ten times more egoistic and vain than Savarkar.

Savarkar's logic is curt, his humour caustic and his whipping electric. He is a stern mouth-stopper. During his premiership Mr. Fazlul Huq boasted that the Muslims were tigers and lions and they would harass the Hindus. Savarkar hit him back : "The history of creation proves that it is men who have reclaimed the earth and lions and tigers had to retire to the obscurity of the forest. We Hindus are men. One man with a whip in his hand controls scores of lions and tigers in a circus and these beasts obey wonderfully well." The same Muslim leader said that Malabar was a part of Arabia. Savarkar pulled him up by replying that if it was so, then Arabia must be annexed to India ! To the Pakistanis and their supporters who said that because in some provinces the Muslims were in a majority, they wanted Pakistan, Savarkar replied with equal ruthlessness that because in Hindusthan the Hindus were in a majority, Hindusthan belonged to the Hindus. Dr. Rajendra Prasad said during the Biharsharif riot days that he advised the Hindus as his *own* people. Savarkar asked Dr. Rajendra Prasad as to when he had deserted his Indian Nationalism and condescended to call only the Hindus his own people. One wordy Socialist once asked Savarkar whether he had read Lenin. The upstart was silenced by Savarkar with one stroke : "Had Lenin read Savarkar ? " Not that he has neglected literature on Communism. The author has seen some books on the subject in Savarkar's small personal library read, underlined and with remarks made in

the margin by Savarkar at the proper places, especially on books by Lenin and Trotsky. Savarkar has read many books on the subject before his release and of late he often directs his men to buy the latest books on Socialism. But what he hates most is blind babbling of foreign phraseology and blind worship which totally disregard the conditions, traditions and the history of our country.

Savarkar is a unique combination of a dreamer and a doer, a prophet and a warrior, a realist and a revolutionary all in one man. In him you will find a Washington who unsheathed his sword for freedom; a Thomas Paine who wielded an inspiring pen, and a Mazzini who ushered in a revolutionary epoch and started the war of Independence. Soaringly imaginative yet severely logical, erudite yet perspicuous, Savarkar is not merely a great writer, but a very great one. Describing Savarkar's place in the domain of literature, Gandhiji's Mahratta biographer, Sri D. N. Shikhare wrote: "It is admitted on all hands, including his political opponents, that Mr. Savarkar is a rare genius. He is a pen of fire. He wields pen and pistol alike. Patriotism and Poetry run through the veins of his literature. England may be proud of her statesmen writers like Morley and MacDonald and Russia may well boast of Tolstoy and Gorky; but India surpasses all these countries in having Mr. Savarkar who is a writer, a statesman and a warrior. His pen would have shaken the world from its bottom but for the narrow scope of the Marathi language, through which mother tongue he masterly expresses himself.[1] In India Savarkar as an author is a class by himself, for Savarkar has written in blood lines with his blood and the bones of martyrs. It is the characteristic of all immortal authors that they cannot write in artificial pruned lines with their stomach at ease, for there is no halfway house for positive personalities. Savarkar's writings raise a storm of emotions and shake your intellect. His pen arouses fierce hatred and fierce loyalties. You feel a storm has passed over you or some power has dashed against you. All his writings, both poetry and prose, preach resistance to tyranny, inspire you with courage and direct your energies towards the liberation of mankind from all bondages. Savarkar is a great poet,

[1] D. N. Shikhare, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

a poet of great, grand and epic poetry. His poetry is logic on fire, as all great poetry is, and satisfies your intellect as well as emotions. His epic genius gave the people high ideals, his great pen infused an irresistible spirit of independence into the people, his supreme courage and unparalleled sacrifice aroused their patriotic feelings, his words made them feel the spirit of nationality and realize the solidarity of the nation. Savarkar has educated the illiterate, motivated the educated and activized the learned.

Savarkar is a great social reformer. Neither talkative nor fashionable reformers can measure Savarkar's worth and work in purging the society pitilessly and fearlessly of its ills, ignorance and superstitions. Many were a bell-ringer to social revolution, a few worked actually in the field, but few had the unfailing courage and the genius of a practical social reformer. A social reformer requires a certain amount of courage, conviction and a stout but elastic heart to achieve his goal. And Savarkar's courage and heart have well shaken the world. His strong conviction, dauntless courage, endless faith, enduring capacity for work, unremitting industry, untiring energy, invincible determination and a volcanic pen belong to the type of men like Luther, Knox, Mazzini, Rousseau, Voltaire and Carlyle, who represent the moral force of the world and stamp their mind upon their age.

But the outstanding characteristic of Savarkar is that he is a great iconoclast, one of the greatest idol-breakers Asia has ever seen or produced. A strong will, a volcanic pen, a powerful hammer, a fiery heart, a scathing contempt for hypocrisy, Savarkar is a born iconoclast, who despises and scorns hypocrisy in religion, society, and politics. He does not strutt off as an agent of God descended down to herald a new era, nor does he pretend to possess an inner voice. His is the voice of reason and science. Therefore he ruthlessly routed and pitilessly hammered out all kinds of superstitions, bondages, sanctimonious hypocrisy in society, in religion and in politics. From bigoted Sanatanists to bogus saints, dead or alive, none escaped the strokes of his hammer ! He possesses all the attributes, tests and elements of greatness. According to Dr. Ambedkar a Great Man is he who acts as the scourge and scavenger of society. Savarkar is a really Great Man,

who is motivated by the dynamics of a social purpose and has acted as the scourge and scavenger of Society.

Savarkar is a hero at many points. The hero as poet in Savarkar is extolled to the skies in Maharashtra; the hero as a man of letters, he is claimed to be an immortal author by litterateurs; the hero as patriot in Savarkar is deified all over India; but the hero as prophet in Savarkar is not yet appreciated by many outside his party. The business of a prophet is to see and teach. A prophet possesses three main qualities. They are insight, courage and sincerity. As to courage and sincerity, Savarkar's name is now a legend. Savarkar has proved the unfailingness of his insight on several occasions. Savarkar predicted as early as 1925 that the separation of Sind from Bombay Province for appeasing the Muslim mind would be a disastrous precedent, would destroy the Sind Hindus and would pique the appetite of the anti-national Muslims. In 1938 he declared to the surprise of the whole nation that the Congress led by Gandhiji would betray the nation and would destroy the unity of India by conceding Pakistan. In 1940 he warned the Assam Hindus that if they did not check the Muslim influx into Assam, Assam would meet the fate of Sind and Bengal. Congressmen then laughed at him. However, in 1947 they owned his prophecy, for Assam was almost tagged to Pakistan, but was fortunately saved through the vigilance of the leaders who at last realized the danger after the frantic and hoarse cry of Savarkar. The warning sounded about the fate of Kashmir in 1938 went unheard and the Kashmir Hindus paid for it and ultimately Hindus all over Hindusthan had to pay crores of rupees and pour their blood for defending Kashmir from the onslaughts of the Pakistanis. Did not the Nizam, too, suffer the fate as predicted by Savarkar?

When World War II broke out and Russia joined it, Savarkar at once remarked that the crafty Britain had saved her throat, and now she would swallow the whole of Africa. At the time of the battle of Stalingrad, Savarkar said that if Japan failed to attack Russia from the Eastern side, both Germany and Japan would lose the war and Japan would have to pay for her folly in the long run. What actually did happen is too well known to be recounted.

Men of prophetic vision never try to please the masses. They aim at guiding them. They always look to the larger interests of the people, not only of their own generation, but of future generations as well. So they are many a time not as popular as they should be. They never pander to popularity, nor do they sacrifice their conscience for success. The masses do not understand the prophetic visions of these men because what these prophets see is beyond their horizon.

III

The shades of prison life have dominated the citizen Savarkar, and have much affected the politician Savarkar too. Those shades and shadows often times obscure his social intercourse with his partymen and public men. Moody and erratic, he could not create a certain warmth that is needed in a party chief towards his colleagues, partymen and followers. For the consolidation and success of a political party, the wings of the soft heart of the party chief must reach at least the connecting hooks in the link. The chief must be cordial enough to enquire about the difficulties of his lieutenants and arrange to help them so as to enable them to devote their best to the cause and service of the people. Excepting the rare names of Ranade, Tilak and Gandhiji, no other party chief could bring himself to this much-needed accommodating frame of mind. Tilak ran to distant places even for settling the marriage of a daughter of his disciple, or could advise a farmer in the matter of his legal problems even from the Mandalay Prison. Gandhiji could tear out his heart, what of purse, to soothe the grief and troubles of his party leaders. But the case of Savarkar, the political leader, is quite different. He could not respond to the enthusiasm or warmth of other leaders, who sought his interviews or valuable guidance, or those who even passed valuable information on to him secretly. The fate of interviewers and foreign visitors was no better. The glamour of the furniture of Mr. Jinnah, the warmth and hospitality of the special guest-house of Tilak for political leaders and eminent guests, the living interest and paternal inquiries of Gandhiji into the personal affairs of his lieutenants, and Pandit Nehru's abiding hospitality to foreigners, or friendly invitations

for dinners to eminent men, admirers, or party leaders, or a casual invitation to his inter-provincial visitors or an appreciative call to the pressmen, all these could not impress Savarkar, the political leader. Cynically disinterested, he did not feel any inward urge for it. His ideas and beliefs of patriotic duties and national obligations were purely and supremely patriotic and selfless. His motto was duty irrespective of any consideration of fruit. And this was the noble motto of all those early selfless revolutionaries. Savarkar expected every Indian to do his duty by his Motherland who pined for freedom. This highly disinterested and selfless mental make-up came in the way of the modern set-up of propaganda, which depends upon much give and take. This has materially affected the destiny of the party and his leadership.

But in spite of such restricted sense of warmth in the social intercourse and sympathy with his party men, lieutenants and followers due to the legacy of his long prison life and shattered health, Savarkar is the only political leader in India for whom and at whose command hundreds of youths would lay down their lives. This is due to Savarkar's unrivalled genius, selfless patriotism, unparalleled sacrifice and dynamic, mighty and mesmeric personality.

So, introvert and restless, Savarkar breathes flames of undying faith in spite of an unsympathetic and unsound constitution that has withstood unimaginable horrors, terrors and tortures of the Andamans. " A long exile in the Andamans wrecked his health early in life, and it is amazing how he has regathered his strength and carried on so long in public life," remarked the *National Herald* while commenting on the retirement of Savarkar in 1943. So much unsound is his constitution that sleep is always forced on him by the use of bromide. Writing about the introvert and restless Savarkar, a writer in the *Hindusthan Times*, Delhi, described Savarkar as an ascetic and inward looking man who in his youth almost set the Thames on fire, and observed : " Savarkar is strange. He may not glitter. His attitude may not please you. He is mesmeric with a capacity to infuse in an observer a sense of cold aloofness." A little cynicism may be, therefore, excused in such a highly constrained constitution. For almost thirteen

years he was companionless and was forced to eat with cruel punctuality, at the same place and the same quality and kind of food prepared with the matchless prison skill and medical care. This has made him what he is today. His isolation is mostly due to circumstances and partly due to his temperament. He lives alone. That giants must live apart and kings have no company is true, literally true of Savarkar.

Savarkar, the promoter of science and advocate of modernism, lives a very simple life. Wonderstruck at the homely and rough simplicity of his little house known as Savarkar Sadan, once Sri Srinivas Sastri asked : " Savarkar, is this the house you live in ? " " Yes," replied Savarkar. " Why, is this not more comfortable than the cell in the Andamans ? " And Sastri was struck with a strange emotion. After much consideration and many visits of world-famous men to his house, there were slight additions which he would call considerable to the equipment and establishment of his house by way of a little furniture. It is a plain middle-class life of contentment, which yearns not for what it does not have.

Savarkar has no friends. Almost all his brilliant colleagues of early days have perished in foreign lands ; others here are now dead and gone. His present colleagues and co-workers cannot understand exactly what he is. Even older politicians like Dr. Moonje talked with Savarkar with due care and awe and none tried to be familiar with him. As to the relations, there are few who venture to be on visiting terms with the family and none lives with him. It is generally the case with all revolutionary leaders that they live almost estranged and segregated from their friends and families as the circumstances and nature of their work demand. In normal course none would be willing to cast in one's lot with a revolutionary and that too a leader, and incur the displeasure of the authorities. And Savarkar is such a name ! Terrific, towering, volcanic, panoramic, mesmeric and historic ! What of living and staying with the person, the fire, those who have played with the name have quailed and have been haunted throughout their lives and it has sat upon their chest like nightmare ! Because of ever-attending dangers Savarkar stays alone with his small family consisting of his wife and only son and sometimes his

married daughter on a visit to her father. His brother, Dr N. D. Savarkar, resided with his family in the same locality. Savarkar is blessed with a wife of a great Aryan type representative of the traditional loyalty and endless devotion that stood the long period of 18 years full of trials and sufferings. Sober, deep, silent and enduring, she is a prudent housewife and a noble soul. The household affairs are smooth and regular. There is no question of choosing food or eatables. Simple food and fruits, bare necessities and no waste is the rule of the kitchen. The kitchen is not bothered about the likes and dislikes. No complaints, no worries whether some vegetables have less salt or more of spices. Often bhajis and curds and at times icecream and shrikhand are welcome. That a man should not be addicted to anything, but should be accustomed to many things is the rule. During a railway journey he may take eggs-curry and seldom mutton, but no smoking, wine never, not a drop in any form. Savarkar does not like a hot meal; almost cold eatables he relishes which you may call a legacy of the Andamans.

When Savarkar is in a happy mood, he may indistinctly hum to himself a line or two from his poetry. In a happy mood and when alone, he may stretch his legs a little, may give a gentle push to his cap if it is on, and may hum a tune. Chocolates and Jintan are relished by him. Snuff is his companion; scent his abiding luxury. His one hobby is gardening and the poet is seen in communion with plants and flowers. Regular light physical exercise in the evening is a habit. He has no love for music. For art he has respect.

Grief, pain, worries and anger he would not give expression to. Neither would joy giggle over his face. Those who surround him must observe precision in details, for his cross-examinations are testing and inseparable and to some extent worrying, even the slightest deviation being immediately detected. None can hide facts from the penetrating and searching eyes. It is true that he is not easy of access. You have to fix up an appointment beforehand. Strict adherence to this rule has saved him much harassment, but also has estranged many. Travellers, business magnates, eminent leaders and even princes had to go back because they did not fix up the interviews beforehand. If you come to Bombay on

some work of yours and come to Savarkar Sadan *in your* hurry to leave Bombay when Savarkar has no time, is it the fault of Savarkar that you leave his house disappointed? Under such a troubled situation, a great liberal luminary once remarked that it was easy to see the King Emperor or the Viceroy but not Savarkar.

Savarkar's handwriting is small, slanting and spreads over every corner by and by. As with time so with paper. He uses it sparingly. No letter would be ready for being posted unless the important lines therein are underlined. You may love to see him reading a newspaper. He holds the newspaper in the left hand and, lifting his spectacles a little with his right thumb, he goes on reading and commenting briefly.

Savarkar gets up at about seven in the morning. His breakfast consists of eggs and tea. Then he peruses newspapers, attends to his correspondence, and interviews his visitors between 9 a.m. and 11-30 a.m. About noon he takes his bath and then meal in the kitchen almost all by himself. In between the meal and the bath he would often sit like a *Yogin* for an hour or so as if in a trance which he calls concentration of mind. At such a time his food may become cold, his wife waiting silently in the kitchen. Owing to pressure of work, of late he found no time to practise what he calls concentration of mind. At noon he has siesta. In the evening comes the reading of important letters to be replied, detailed reading of newspapers and select books. After tea and a talk with familiar guests, if any, he goes downstairs for a stroll in his garden with some gardener's tools accompanied by the watchman who assists him. Then follows the daily regular physical exercise. After supper he devotes generally an hour or so to important office work and retires with some regular dose of medicine.

One point more and quite interesting. As is typical of revolutionary leaders, Savarkar talks very slowly about his personal and home matters. To him secrets are treasures. He is too great a veteran revolutionary leader. None could screw out from him what Dr. Schatt, the German Finance Wizard, told him on the eve of the outbreak of World War II, nor the source he received the letters of Ras Behari Bose from Japan

during the course of World War II, nor the full details of his meeting with Subhas Bose.

IV

Savarkar is majestic in his misery and serene in his sorrows. He clings to the state of his things with the pride of a Pope. Where politics and policy are concerned, money means little or nothing, his ideal everything. Savarkar will not march with anybody and everybody, be he a kingly Kuber or a moneyed Mahatma. Men of mission never rotate around others like satellites. They are creators of dynasties and makers of kings and kingdoms. They never sacrifice their conscience for wordly success ; nor do they care for a passing phase of life, of fame and of happiness. So is Savarkar. What position Savarkar could not have achieved which eminent Liberals, moderate politicians and opportunist leaders could achieve ? Is there any talent superior to Savarkar in the first Cabinet of Free India in intellect, in sacrifice, in mental and oratorical powers, in patriotic service, in intellectual honesty and political strategy ? Where his lieutenant leader, Dr. Mookerjee, could ascend with his blessing, he could have easily walked into such positions. But Savarkar did not compromise his conscience for the success of personal gains and cheap popularity. He sacrificed all the great honour that could have easily fawned at his feet, or else " our dream of an Indian Republic with Vinayak Damodar Savarkar as its first President "[1] would have been realized today.

But life for a cause, for a faith and not for power, Savarkar loves most. That life may be surrounded by a storm, or a volcano or the gallows. For, to refuse to betray one's conscience to the last, in spite of a general defeat and humiliation and stand for a fight against the world, bearing a cheerful face and the cross of sacrifice as freely as the sunflower gives its bosom to the rays of the sun, is the creed of Savarkar. Savarkar is a patriot, who fights losing battles and has the spirit of martyrs who face defeats and death amidst the shouts of enemies. Naturally, to Savarkar the greatest sacrifice a man can make in his life is that of cheap fame. Times without

[1] Niranjan Pal, *The Mahratta*, dated 27-5-1938.

number he told his co-workers, his lieutenants and followers in the Mahasabha that those who had people's welfare at heart should never pander to popularity. Kant also said the same thing. He said : " Seek not the favour of the multitude, for it is seldom got by honest and lawful means." And although Savarkar pitilessly hammered the so-called gods, godmen and superstitions out of the temples of society, religion and politics, his popularity is tremendous, extraordinary and abiding. Countless heads have bowed down before Savarkar, lakhs of believing multitudes have fallen at his feet with devotion in spite of his resisting unwillingness on rational grounds. Male and female octogenarians have regarded him as an incarnation of God, the Patitpavan, and a few even breathed their last in tranquillity after having a look at his picture which they believed to be divine. In the emulation of their devotion to Savarkar many brilliant youths like Sri Maokar of Nagpur risked their lives. Many have thrown out pictures of false gods and so-called godmen after a visit to Savarkar. His old colleagues and veteran public men have wriggled in their death-beds awaiting his impossible *Darshan*—glimpse—and some died with his name on their faltering tongue and wavering lips instead of the call of *Ramnam* ! Several revolutionaries, many patriots and some poets have borne the dust from his residence on their foreheads with devotion. To thousands he is nothing less than a God. To lakhs he is an art of eloquence. To millions he is a poem of patriotism, a picture of sacrifice and to poets he is an acted epic !

Such a fiery, positive and forceful personality is bound to be brutally frank in his criticism of historic and contemporary personalities. Of Tilak he ever speaks with reverence. He has defensive love for Kelkar, reverence for Ranade, high respect for Gokhale, Nana Shankarshet, Dadabhoy Naoroji, Surendranath Banerjee, B. C. Pal, Srinivas Sastri, M. R. Jayakar and Vijayaraghavachariar. For Lajpat Rai, Hardayal, Virendranath Chattopadhyaya, Ras Behari Bose, Bhai Parmananda, and Moonje he has a deep love. He has a soft corner for M. N. Roy and Subhas Bose. He describes Vivekananda as a world genius, Dayananda as a Yogi, a seer and a spiritual teacher who worked like a giant for the uplift of mankind, and describes Dr. Ambedkar's towering personality, erudition and

capacity to lead as an asset to the nation. He styled Ramananda Chatterjee as a *great patriot, who defended the* legitimate rights of the Hindus and whose humanitarianism and nationalism, he said, were of the purest ray serene. When Rajaji propagated the ideal of Pakistan, Savarkar described him as a subtle mad Mulla though he had once described Rajaji as the best Premier. He calls Azad crafty; Pandit Nehru sincere but flamboyant. He wishes well of Sardar Patel as to him the Sardar is the only man in the Congress 'who has steered the ship of our newly born Bharatiya State clear of many a rock and shoal.'

Savarkar is Sir C. V. Raman's bright Diamond. Millions hail him as *Swatantryaveer*—the hero of Independence. To Rajaji Savarkar is a symbol of courage, bravery, fearlessness and intense patriotism and a pioneer who strove and struggled for inflaming the aspirations of the Indian people.[1] Gandhiji paid tributes to Savarkar's patriotism and fearlessness and said that sacrifice was the common bond between them.[2] Jayakar said that to honour Savarkar was to honour patriotism and sacrifice. M. N. Roy described him as his inspirer and a fearless man and appreciated his sacrifice and intellectual honesty. Sri Srinivas Sastri hailed Savarkar as 'a great and fearless patriot and added that volumes could be written about Veer Savarkar's yeomen services in the cause of Indian freedom.' Mr. K. F. Nariman described Savarkar as a colourful, picturesque and romantic personality. Bhai Parmananda said of him that Savarkar was the fusion of Burke and Mazzini. To Mr. S. R. Pather, Bar-at-law, South Africa, and one-time colleague of Savarkar, India owes her present advanced position to Savarkar's early struggle in the cause of freedom. To historian Dr. Pattabhi, Savarkar is one of the noble characters that devoted their life to this noble and patriotic task (emancipation of Motherland) and who worked according to their lights and according to the lights of the times for the emancipation of India. To Guy A. Aldred, editor the *Word,* Glasgow, he is a prophet, and deserves a place in the line of prophets!

[1] Rajaji, Message to the *Lokamanya*, dated 26-6-1937.
[2] D. N. Shikhare, the *Chitramaya Jagat*, November 1944.

V

But what about the aims and ideal for which Savarkar stood and fought? Is his life a success? It is for the cool, calculating and balanced history to assess man's work with a cold impartiality and grade it great or otherwise. Feelings, passions and prejudices often affect contemporary judgment.

Reviewing this eventful life, one finds two notes of action, which had filled the skies at the time of Savarkar's birth and boyhood, have echoed through the life story of Savarkar. The revolting force of Wasudeo Balwant, the spiritual and social renaissance set in by Dayananda on the one hand, and the wave of Hindu-Muslim riots and the consequential bifurcation in the political ideal of the Hindus and Muslims on the other. The revolutionary urge and the Hindu-Muslim problem clung to Savarkar's life throughout. Savarkar took a vow while in his teens that he would fight out the British power and make his country free, independent and great. His political ideal was: "India must be independent. India must be united. India must be republican. India must have one common tongue. India must have one common script. That script is Nagari; that Language is Hindi; that republic is that national form of Government in which the sovereign power—whether it be exercised by a monarch or by a President matters not much—must rest ultimately and uncompromisingly in the hands of the Indian people." This was the ideal for which the Abhinava Bharat stood. This was the ideal for which the Hindu Mahasabha stands. There is scarcely any other historic figure under the sun that has gone through such epic ordeals as Savarkar has done for fulfilling his vow.

The idea of bifurcation conceived by the historic Muslim mind and started on its foot by Sir Syed Ahmed was enthusiastically supported by the Muslims, was accepted by the Congress leaders and ended in the vivisection of India. As Savarkar saw independence in sight, he grew restless about the unity and integrity of India, the concept and ideal of which to men like Savarkar was noble, sublime and divine. But during the period of Savarkar's long incarceration and internment, the Gandhian lead betrayed a woeful lack of self-confidence in the conduct of the national struggle, ultimately

discredited the power, prestige and patriotism of the Hindus, the national majority, undermined their confidence and mortgaged the destiny of the country to the anti-national forces. Savarkar's insight perceived this danger and he forewarned the people and applied all his energies to averting the colossal disaster which was ushered in by the Gandhian lead. But with herculean efforts he could not avert the vivisection of the Motherland. The Hindu Mahasabha lacked full-time workers. The party had no 'dailies' to back up their propaganda and leaders. There were few weeklies at District places, but they also suffered for want of active support. The culpable boycott of the so-called nationalist but in fact commercialized press and the Press Agencies on Savarkar's statements and speeches was no less responsible for this fate. The news agencies that could give full and roaring publicity to Jinnah's anti-national outbursts, statements and speeches, suppressed wickedly the views, speeches and statements of Savarkar and whenever they broadcast them, they dropped out most pertinent criticism of the Britishers and the Congress party and his constructive and valuable advice to his countrymen. And when these fabricated extracts came down to the commercialized papers, they did the rest to Savarkar's statements and speeches. The ignorant and superstitious masses were not knowing what was happening. In fact, those capitalists and moneyed men who had contributed heavily to the Congress press and propaganda for years, were not now prepared to lose all investment by incurring the displeasure of the ruling party in the country. In such a state of affairs, Savarkar's warnings went unheard and he lost his battle for Akhand Hindusthan. That way his fate is no better than the fate of Burke and Demosthenes, the two great pathetic figures in the political history of the world. In his brilliant essay on Edmund Burke, John Churton Collins observed: "Both (Burke and Demosthenes) animated by the purest motives, patriots to the innermost fibre, with no thought, with no aim, but for the public good, wore out their lives in leading forlorn hopes and in fighting losing battles. Both were prophets with a curse of Cassandra upon them, to be found wiser after the event, to be believed when all was lost." Add the third name of Savarkar to the line of these

great orators and read the lines again. Telling his readers that Demosthenes saw Athens at the feet of Macedonian despot, and Burke saw England dismembered of America, Mr. Collins goes on to say: "Of the superhuman efforts made by the great Athenian to retrieve the disasters in which the neglect of his warnings had involved his countrymen, there was not one which was not thwarted either by a cruel fortune or by the perfidy and levity of those whom he was striving in their own despite to save."[1] Savarkar strove his utmost to avert the greatest betrayal in human history and the colossal disaster, but was thwarted by the perfidy, levity and betrayal of his contemporaries. Nevertheless, his failure was more glorious than the ignoble success of his political opponents.

As for the Independence that came, it did not come as a result of the Congress struggle alone which was fought out by the Socialists in 1942. It is ludicrous to say that the battle was fought in 1942 and the victory came in 1947. The final victory was won when politics was carried into the Indian Army, when patriotism took fire in the ranks of the Indian armed forces, when militarized Indians thus inspired with a great ideal rose in revolt under the lead of Ras Behari Bose and Netaji Subhas Bose. The British Imperialists, considerably weakened by World War II, realized that it was impossible to keep India in bondage any more for they had no faithful army. The army, that was entrusted with the work, had turned their guns towards their heads. The Prime Minister of Britain, Mr. Attlee, stated before the House of Commons on March 15, 1946, on the occasion of making a declaration of the proposed transfer of power to India, that the national idea had spread right through, not the least perhaps among some of the soldiers who had done such wonderful service in the war. Mr. Fenner Brockway, the Political Secretary of the Independent Labour Party of England, gave three reasons for the transfer of power by Britain to India. He said that the Indian people were determined to achieve Independence; secondly, there was the revolt of the Royal Indian Navy and that the Indian forces could not be relied upon for serving Britain's purposes, and

[1] *Twentieth Century Essays And Addresses*, edited by W. A. J. Archbold, p. 175.

thirdly, Britain did not want to estrange India which was a great market and a source of foodstuffs for Britain. Though Brockway did not mention directly the I.N.A., it was clear that the revolt in the armed forces had bent them to the inevitable. Then who had truly worked towards that end, the carrying of the fire of patriotism into the ranks of the Indian army ever since 1908? And who made heroic attempts despite the curses of the Congressmen and Congress journals to preach militarization and impress upon patriotic youths the importance of entering the Army, Navy and Air Forces? It was Savarkar and Savarkar alone. At last the destined leader, Netaji Subhas Bose, seized the opportunity, and reaped the fruit of the pioneer efforts of Ras Behari Bose and the militarization policy of Savarkar. History will record this. Viewed in this light Savarkar has achieved his goal. The heroic war inaugurated by the heroes of 1857 for winning back the independence was fought out to a successful end by the sacrifice of thousands of revolutionaries of Ram Singh Kuka, Wasudeo Balwant, the Abhinava Bharat, the Anusilan Samiti, and other organizations in Bengal and the Ghadr; the heroic sufferers and patriots in the Congress, the valiant fighters of the Party of Bhagat Singh and the pioneer services of the Liberals.

And what about other principles for which Savarkar stood? The national script of India is now the Devanagari, the Lingua Franca is now Hindi. Savarkar has been struggling hard since 1908 for investing Hindi and the Nagari script with national honour. That dream has been ultimately realized. He worked for it in the Andamans, he struggled for spreading the movement all over the country from Ratnagiri and after his release in 1937 the movement gathered force and at last the Hindu Sanghatanist forces purged the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan of Gandhian influence and won a resounding victory. But the finishing stroke was given by Savarkar to the cult of Hindustani during the annual session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan held in Bombay in December 1947. Addressing the Session, Savarkar warned the leaders of the Sammelan against the threats of Gandhiji and Nehru and asked the delegates and the one hundred and fifty one members of the Constituent Assembly who had signed their pledge to support

Sanskritized Hindi and the Nagari Script to achieve their object in spite of those threats. He added that the interests of the nation must be their sole concern and above the threats, fasts and fads of Gandhiji and Nehru.

The Indian Republic has also come into being on January 26, 1950. The sovereignty is now in the hands of the people.

But this is not the end of Savarkar's mission. For making this free India an up-to-date and powerful nation, along with the defence problem, the labour problem must be attended to and solved satisfactorily. With the growing industrialization and the growing agricultural needs, the labour problem and the agrarian problem are coming to a head and they have begun to affect the destiny of political parties and leaders in India. As the labour problem affected Mazzini's leadership in a way in his old age, Savarkar the leader of the Hindu Mahasabha is not less affected by it.

For the solution of the labour problem, Savarkar has his own nationalistic approach. To him both Manu and Marx are not infalliable and omniscient. According to him the Marxian approach is one of the many remedies suggested for the removal of human ills as those of Darwin and Freud, who also diagnosed the ills of humanity in their own way. Being a rationalist, Savarkar is not a believer in the orthodox church of Marx. But a lover, promoter and upholder as he is of the machine age, he understands that social equality and social justice are the culmination of the machine age. In his scheme of things the labour problem was upto the day of Independence a limb of the nation that was to be set free. With the freedom and progress of the nation, he believed that the fate of labourers must improve. That is why he gave more importance to the Pakistan problem that also involved economically and politically the destiny of India and her problem of peace and safety. National freedom and national security are the prerequisites for practising any scheme concerning land, labour and industries. But then the modern youth, the labourers and workers did not amply understand why Savarkar's party was not the least moved whenever there were unrest, agitation and strikes in the labour area. There was a fair chance for the party to practise the principle of national co-ordination of class interests and fight for the

workers. In fact, the much advertised socialist in Nehru is doing the same thing. But because Savarkar had thrown all his might and main for averting the national disaster, he had no time to pay attention to the labour and agrarian problems.

India is now coming over to the ideal of Savarkar. If India is to survive, she must accept Savarkarism. She must approach all social and political problems with Savarkar's realistic, scientific, and nationalistic angles. She must mechanize her agriculture, must gradually liquidate all landlordism, nationalize all key industries and industrialize on a broader scale. She must Hinduise all key-posts and militarize the Hindus. Not conflagration of class interests, but interests of the nation should be her motto.

The ideal of Savarkar desires that India must follow her bent. India must represent the culture of the national majority, the Hindus. Not the prestige and greatness of one individual, but the prosperity and security of the common man must be her goal. It has been said of Bismark that he made Germany great, but the Germans too small. Savarkarism says that this should not be allowed to happen in India. Some say that India will be a China. That cannot happen to India, if she learns as early as possible that neither a family rule, nor a group rule, nor one party rule leads to the prosperity and security of the nation, but the joint responsibility and real democracy lead to its prosperity and security. But India would be a Poland, if the present leadership hugs the wrong belief that Indian history began with its rise and cuts itself from the spirit, history and names of Vikramaditya, Shalivahan, Shivaji, Guru Govind Singh, Dayananda, Vivekananda and Tilak. They are India's representative guides, gurus, inspirers, and saviours, who teach India how to survive with honour and self-respect in this world. And after having made sure of security and survival, India can look forward to Buddha and Mahaveer.

And if India is true to these saviours, India would realize Savarkar's another prophecy made ten years ago. He said: "If you wish, O Hindus, to prosper as a great and glorious Hindu Nation under the sun, and you will have a claim on it, that State must be established under the Hindu Flag. This dream would be realized during this or coming generation. If

it is not realized, I may be styled as a day-dreamer, but if it comes true, I would stand forth as its prophet.

I am bequeathing this legacy to you."

If in the history of modern India there is any great leader who neither pursued fame nor followed fortune, nor individual greatness, discarding national interests, national integrity and national honour, that great leader is Veer Savarkar and as such he would carry influence with posterity. As he was not a party to the vivisection of India, which is a heritage of sorrow and disgrace to posterity and the greatest betrayal ever known in human history, Savarkar would be a beacon-light of hope, guidance, inspiration and courage.

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